

Technical Assistance for Public Hospitals and Development of the Hospital Accreditation Program

Cooperation Program between the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MOH) and the French Health Authority (HAS) 2007-2008

A cooperation agreement was signed between the Lebanese MOH and the French Health Authority (HAS) on July 3rd, 2006, in order to support the MOH in the development and institutionalization of the hospital accreditation program. In this respect, a contract was signed between the MOH and the Ecole Supérieure des Affaires (ESA) on July 6th, 2007. ESA has been designated as a local counterpart for the HAS in order to implement the project activities and ensure all logistical and administrative support accordingly.

The contract includes the following activities:

- 1. Development of accreditation policies and procedures:** this would define structured accreditation policies and procedures in line with international standards for developing accreditation programs that allows for a better governance, and using the available expertise in the private sector in the field of hospital audits. This would be done through the selection of a number of private certification bodies accredited by the MOH to conduct hospital accreditation visits. Accreditation awards will be based on the self-assessment reports presented to the national accreditation committee and the audit reports presented by the certification bodies. The new procedure will highlight the role of the current accreditation committee and the technical unit that would manage the program. The new accreditation procedure shall include a formal self-assessment step and will allow for a formal and documented appeal process. A draft copy of the accreditation policies and procedures was presented to the MOH on October 11, 2007.
- 2. Technical assistance to public hospitals:** An education program targeting public hospitals will aim at introducing quality improvement systems into each hospital as it exerts a significant, long-term impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of health services. This occurs by influencing priorities, changing values, and highlighting the need in some cases to reallocate resources.

Through the accreditation standards and the proposed education, physicians and other clinicians would learn about the value of clinical protocols/pathways/guidelines and evidence based medicine. Administrators and managers required to learn about customer satisfaction, designing and analysing systems and processes; and all staff who need to learn about performance measurement, teamwork, customer-supplier relationships, and the requirement to find better, more cost effective ways to provide improved patient care would gain this relative knowledge thorough the proposed education sessions.

The educational program would combine theoretical modules and field visits to each hospital by the HAS experts in order to provide hands-on assistance in the implementation of quality systems and the conduction of self-assessment.

The program started on October 19 through a seminar of hospital directors to launch the project activities and to provide hospitals with the work program over the next 6 months of training and technical assistance activities.

The training program is divided into 3 phases:

- A series of 5 two-day workshops organized during the month of November 2007. 3 representatives from each hospital representing the 3 main disciplines (medical, nursing and administrative) attend each workshop in a group of 5-6 hospitals per workshop. The workshops focus on the development of quality systems in a hospital setting, an introduction to quality tools and methods, documentation and preparation for the accreditation visits.
- 2 two-day visits for each hospitals between January and April 2008 . The first visit would be an opportunity to examine with the hospital staff the progress in implementing the quality system and the organizational structure in place to support this implementation. The second visit will aim at working with the hospitals on the completion of the self-assessment in preparation for the hospital survey.
- After the hospital surveys are conducted, each hospital will benefit from a one-day technical support in order to develop its quality action plan based on the survey report.

- 3. Upgrading of the Accreditation standards:** the revision of the current accreditation system aims will allow the program to evolve in a way to be in line with international trends in this field. This shall be done by addressing key issues related to patient and client safety on the one hand and introducing key performance measure in clinical areas that allow for an evaluation of outcomes of care. Accordingly two chapters will be added to the current standards and related to risk management and evaluation of clinical practice.
- 4. Prequalification and selection of private certification bodies:** under the newly proposed accreditation model, the MOH would accredit a number of private certification bodies who will conduct hospital audits based on the revised accreditation standards. The HAS will assist the MOH in the development of prequalification documents, the evaluation and final selection of the list of accredited certification bodies. In order to ensure elements of probity and transparency, the HAS will conduct the whole selection process and would inform the MOH of the results. The accredited bodies will then be monitored and evaluated through a joint mechanism defined between the MOH and the HAS.

5. **Survey of public hospitals:** An audit would be conducted against the currently adopted accreditation standards and would include a maximum of 25 public hospitals between the months of May and July 2008, after the implementation of the training program and the self assessment in order to assess progress made in this endeavor. Audits will be conducted the French surveyors of the HAS. Surveyors' teams will be composed of a minimum of 2 experts per team with and hospital survey visits will range from 2- 4 days. In preparation for these visits, each hospital will submit a self-assessment report at least 4 weeks before the visit. Hospital accreditation results will follow the same scoring and decision rules currently adopted and individual hospital survey reports will be forwarded , in parallel , to each hospital and as well as the MOH.