

# Overcoming the barriers migrants face in accessing health care

## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Over 20 million citizens from the rest of the world were living in the EU on 1 January 2016, with 2.4 million arriving in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Migration remains politically charged in the EU and treatment of migrants varies considerably in different EU member states. The objectives of the workshop are to describe the structural barriers to improving the health of migrants in Europe, with a focus on access to health care, and present evidence from across Europe and beyond about what works in what circumstances to overcome these barriers. From this, consideration and discussion will be invited about generalizable lessons of the experiences in Europe, to improving the health of migrants worldwide.

## WORKSHOP PLAN

3 x 15 minute presentations, with 45 minutes interactive facilitated discussion (90-minute workshop).

Chair/ facilitator: Prof Martin McKee (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine)

Speaker 1: Dr Lucinda Hiam, Health Advisor at Doctors of the World

Many migrants now fear attending health care facilities in England following agreement by the NHS to share data with immigration enforcement authorities. This presentation will describe how one NGO has responded, through advocacy and practical action.

Speaker 2: Nikos Gionakis, Babel

Health providers often lack cultural competence to address mental health issues among migrants. With a focus on Greece, this presentation will explore problems that arise and how they can be overcome.

Speaker 3: Dr Seth Holmes, Berkley

This will review best practice in training health workers in structural competence, including advancing their understanding of barriers migrants face including irregular status, criminalization, lack of access to housing, education and other threats to health.

## MAIN MESSAGES (42 WORDS)

1. Migrants in Europe face many and diverse structural barriers in accessing healthcare

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics)

2. There is now considerable experience in overcoming these barriers, involving advocacy, workforce development, and practical actions
3. Lessons from Europe may be of use at the global level