

## **Addressing Europe's urgent health workforce problem: Action for Health and Equity Addressing medical Deserts (AHEAD)**



*One of Europe's urgent health challenges for the 21st century is medical desertification. Medical deserts are isolated or depopulated areas with such significant falling numbers of medical practitioners and overall health workforce shortages that they hamper health worker availability and exacerbate health inequalities in the population, especially among vulnerable groups. We - six civil society organisations of the European consortium project Action for Health and Equity Addressing medical Deserts (AHEAD) - aim to reduce these health inequalities by addressing medical desertification in Europe.*

Over the course of 26 months, our goal is to achieve better access to health services, especially in underserved areas, and more equitable access to sufficient, skilled and motivated health workers. We will focus on the countries Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, Romania and Serbia. The AHEAD partner organisations are Cittadinanzattiva (Italy), National School of Public Health Management (Moldova), VU Athena Institute (the Netherlands), Wemos (the Netherlands), Center for Health Policies and Services (Romania) and Media Education Centre (Serbia).

We will investigate the different manifestations of medical deserts in Europe and develop policy solutions that will improve health worker availability for all. We aim to do this by building knowledge, encouraging (digital) innovation in health service delivery, and applying a participatory approach to public health policy making.

AHEAD is a member of the EU Health Workforce Projects Cluster Network that aims to provide tools, practical guidelines and improve the sharing of best practices that can help EU Member States design and implement their policies related to health workforce retention, task-shifting and regional medical desertification. Our project is primarily funded by the European Commission, with co-funding from Open Society Foundations.

### **Questions? Want to stay up-to-date?**

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