



THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN POLAND

Date: 28 February 2022

Prof. Dr. Shlomo Vinker
WONCA Europe President

Dear Prof. Vinker, Dear Shlomo,

Aggression against Ukraine, although not entirely surprising, is the implementation of a black scenario, which we all believed could be avoided. Over the last 5 days, 300 000 refugees from Ukraine have arrived in Poland, and this number is constantly growing. Some estimates go as far as 3 or even 4 million. Some of them continue to the west of Europe, where their family members may already be. However, Poland is home to the largest Ukrainian diaspora, the size of which is estimated at 1.5-2 million people. Obviously, not all refugees have relatives in our country who can offer them shelter and necessary help. The Polish government has opened the border to all people fleeing the war and, in cooperation with local governments, is trying to organize their living conditions in the near future. The activity of numerous non-governmental organizations and millions of ordinary citizens who spontaneously help refugees is also extraordinary. Increasing numbers of them reach the interior of the country, where we are all trying to help them. They are most often mothers with children or the elderly. Almost all of my colleagues have offered their homes as a safe haven for these terribly troubled people. Today, my wife and I are expecting the first of them also in our home.

As far as medical assistance is concerned, it seems to be well organized in Poland at the moment. According to today's decisions of the Ministry of Health, refugees who cross the Polish-Ukrainian border after February 24, receive the same rights to healthcare as all insured citizens of our country. Consequently, GPs may consult them, order additional tests, refer to specialists/hospitals and prescribe medications in the same way as to all their other patients.

The Board of the College of Family Physicians in Poland has undertaken the initiative of opening special medical points near border crossings, offering first medical aid to persons crossing the border. It must be remembered that many of them are people who have waited several dozen hours at the border, are chilled, often with symptoms of infection. However, after a thorough diagnosis of the situation, it seems that at least at present there is no such necessity. Colleagues running their practices in the border areas reorganized them to accommodate everyone who needs it.

At present, we are proceeding with the initiative of purchasing by the College of Family Physicians in Poland, dressings, infusion fluids and small surgical equipment, which we intend to transfer to one of the War Hospitals in Ukraine. I expect that today the Board of the College will adopt a resolution by correspondence on the amount of funds allocated for this purpose. It will certainly be a significant amount. We are also working on the logistics of transporting the goods across the border, from where, thanks to the contacts of colleagues from border areas, the transport will be taken over and delivered to the addressee.

There is no doubt, however, that the situation is extremely dynamic and we do not exclude other actions, if necessary. We would like to thank WONCA Europe for the declaration of support which may prove very helpful in the future.

Sincerely yours

Prof. Adam Windak, M.D., Ph.D.

Vice-President of the College of Family Physicians in Poland