

Government Decree on Screenings (1339/2006)

Issued on 21 December 2006

Section 1 – Purpose of the Decree

- (1) This Decree lays down the organization of screenings for the inhabitants of a municipality as part of the public health activity.

Section 2 – Definition of screening

- (1) For the purposes of this Decree, "screening" means examination of the population or a certain part of the population, or sampling in order to discover a certain disease or its precursor or to identify a pathogen.
- (2) Screening is a part of preventive health care. Screening includes the definition of the target group, individual advice and guidance, performing and analysing the screening tests, delivery of feedback information, referral to further examinations and organization of the necessary health services.

Section 3 – Screening programmes

- (1) The municipality shall organize the following screenings for its inhabitants in accordance with a national screening programme:
 - 1) Breast cancer screening every 20–26 months for women aged between 50 and 69 who were born in 1947 or later;
 - 2) Cervix cancer screening every five years for women aged between 30 and 60;
 - 3) For pregnant women:
 - a) a general early pregnancy ultrasound scan during week 10 to 14 of the pregnancy;
 - b) detection of chromosomal abnormalities primarily through early pregnancy combined screening (blood screen test in week 8 to 11 of the pregnancy and the measurement of neck oedema in connection with a general ultrasound scan in week 10 to 12 of the pregnancy) or, alternatively, a triple screen test in week 14 or 15 of the pregnancy; and
 - c) an ultrasound scan for the detection of severe structural abnormalities in week 18 to 21 of the pregnancy or after week 24 of the pregnancy.
- (2) In addition to the screenings referred to in subsection 1, the municipality can organize other screenings as part of the public health activity in order to discover a certain disease or its precursor or to identify a pathogen, or it can organize the screenings referred to in subsection 1 on a wider scale.
- (3) Before starting the screening referred to in subsection 2, the municipality shall assess the requirements and impacts imposed on the health care system. The assessment shall include an examination of the disease to be screened, its incidence and treatment, screening methods, effectiveness, organization and total costs of screening, as well as the ethical aspects relating to screening.

Section 4 – *Organization of screenings*

- (1) The screening shall be organized in accordance with a programme established by the municipality in advance, taking sufficient quality control and quality assurance procedures into account.
- (2) In order to provide appropriate screening services, the municipality shall monitor and evaluate the quality of the screening and the reliability of the tests.

Section 5 – *Participation in the screening*

- (1) All of the municipality's inhabitants that belong to the screening group shall be entitled to participate in the screening on equal grounds.
- (2) The participation in the screening is voluntary. Those responsible for the organization of the screening shall ensure that the municipality's inhabitants have access to sufficient information on the objectives and effectiveness of the screening, the possible risks involved with the screening, and the organization of the screening.
- (3) The health services shall be organized in such a way that there is no discrimination between the municipality's inhabitants who have participated or intend to participate and those who have not participated or do not intend to participate in the screening organized under the national screening programme or some other screening organized by the municipality.

Section 6 – *Special conditions*

- (1) The health care operating unit participating in the collection, analysis, feedback delivery and further examination of the screening samples shall have sufficient expertise, as well as the necessary staff and equipment, at its disposal.

Section 7 – *Direction and monitoring*

- (1) The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health shall monitor and evaluate the ongoing screening programmes and their methods in collaboration with the National Public Health Institute and other operators in the sector.

Section 8 – *Entry into force*

- (1) This Decree enters into force on 1 January 2007.
- (2) The municipality is required to organize the screening of chromosomal abnormalities and the screening of severe structural abnormalities of the foetus referred to in section 3 in accordance with this Decree, and within three years following the date of its entry into force.
- (3) This Decree repeals section 4 of the Primary Health Care Decree (802/1992).