

Dear friends!

Let me congratulate you with the opening of the 13th European Congress of Ostomy Associations!

I'd like to congratulate all participants of the Congress, and especially its host Ukrainian Association of Ostomy patients (ASTOM-Ukraine), and its president –Petro Rosolovskiy, organizer of the ostomy rehabilitation process Yuryi Lozynsky and all people who made valuable contribution to the integration of ostomy people to society and their return to normal life. The eighteen-year experience of our Association in Russia showed that the development of rehabilitation process couldn't be without consolidation of the three fields of social and economic development of society: state, commercial, social. Only in the format of social partnership of these three fields: state structures of legislative and executive power, healthcare, producers of ostomy care products and social organizations it is possible to solve the problem of medical and social rehabilitation of thousands of ostomy people.

There is no doubt that top priority in rehabilitation of ostomy people is availability and accessibility of ostomy appliances. It's impossible to solve any rehabilitation problem without ostomy care products.

That is why the efforts of ASTOM were aimed firstly at consolidation of constructive activities with representatives of coloproctological service and producers of ostomy care products, at creation of legal basis for availability of ostomy care products and organization of ostomy care service, initial and most important part of the rehabilitation process. |The process started in Moscow in the middle of 90's when ASTOM in cooperation with the chief coloproctologist of Moscow, doctors of Moscow coloproctological center and producer of ostomy care products ConvaTec managed to acquire state reimbursement of ostomy care products and then the process spread to the rest of Russia. Today all over Russia in spite of numerous problems ostomy people with invalid status are supplied with ostomy appliance. We managed to legalize the list of reimbursed ostomy care products and norms of supply.

In the middle of 90's with our active participation and organizational support Ostomy Care Service was established in Moscow on the base of the Moscow Center of Coloproctology. Now about nine thousands people are registered in the Moscow Ostomy Rehabilitation Center.

ASTOM as the base of the Coordination Council of Russian Regional Public Organizations of Ostomy people takes part in the development of rehabilitation process all over Russia. I should also say that there are a lot of problems in coordination of the system of ostomy care products supply. It is too complex and lacks transparency. Moreover, there is no unified system! There are three systems in Russia plus another one in Moscow. Ostomy care products are supplied through the Federal Fund of Social Insurance, through the Fund of Social Protection, through compensation of the above funds and in Moscow through the city budget. Today there are about 120 thousands of ostomy people in Russia (unfortunately there are no exact data) and only about 60 thousands of them are supplied with OC products. In Moscow OC products are reimbursed in the amount of 50 USD per month, in the rest of Russian - 15~20 USD per month. Thus due to the above mentioned problems in the system of the ostomy care products supply about 900 mln RUB (30 mln USD) are allocated annually, though the potential is twice as much.

Returning to ASTOM I'd like to point out that we organized our work in such a way that interests of the medical sphere are not collided with social rehabilitation, we are responsible for non-medical rehabilitation, but rehabilitation should be complex and we seek cooperation with medical specialists.

For example, one of our activity directions is the psychological support of people with stoma in pre- and post- operative periods. Our psychologist works directly in coloproctology departments of main medical centers. So in addition to medical care patients receive psychological support and primary social and legal information.

I'd also like to emphasize importance of social and legal support provided for patients after the operation. We have social and cultural rehabilitation as

well. This service is extremely necessary as it helps people with stoma to overcome isolation barrier and to improve quality level of adaptation and reintegration to society. Joint social and cultural activities enable the patient to live full life, to communicate with people and the world, to overcome isolation and inner emotional restraint.

We provide social support for ostomy people with low income. Charitable aid is provided by consumer goods, sanitary and hygiene and medical products. ASTOM publishes an exclusive journal for ostomy people and people with other discharge dysfunctions "ASTOM. Guide on active life"; supports an informative website; publishes information and reference literature on social issues. Currently, ASTOM is actively developing a new direction: equipping public toilets with special sanitary equipment for ostomy people

In conclusion I'd like to say that the process of ostomy patients rehabilitation is a multilevel process. It shouldn't be executed by primitive methods – acquirement of disability status, supplying with ostomy bags and disability allowance. It's necessary to implement innovative rehabilitation technologies aimed at rehabilitation of ostomy patients as well as at changing society awareness, transformation of the aggressive environment to a friendly relations consortium: ostomy people - society - state.

Viatcheslav Sukhanov,

The Chairman of the Coordinative Council of regional public organizations of stoma patients of Russia