



## Statement by Malta Health Network August 2022

Patients and their relatives should not bear the burden of suffering from industrial actions and disputes. In situations of disagreement which arise from time to time in the health sector between Government and unions, the Malta Health Network (MHN) urges all parties to ensure that ultimately the patients' health and wellbeing are given utmost priority. Actions taken by both parties must not in any way create unnecessary hardship to the patients. Anyone considering directives should put themselves in the receiving end of the patient and carers who have no voice at decision taking level. They are not represented or poorly represented at high level institutions such as the Council for Health and MCESD.

MHN strongly reiterates and supports previous statements issued by the Office of the Ombudsman in similar situations through the Commissioner for Health, that it is inhumane for Unions to persist in using patients as pawns to pressure the authorities to accede to their requests.

Similarly, during industrial actions of 2021, a spokesperson for the Health Ministry was reported to say that such industrial actions will "seriously prejudice the provision of the public health service, possibly causing irreparable damage to the patients and users."

It is utterly unfair and unsafe for patients to be made to suffer at the expense of such situations and is also an emotional burden for many health care workers who have their patients' best interests at heart. The bottom line is that, ultimately, we are ALL patients or relatives of patients at some point in our lives and we ALL appreciate that our health and wellbeing, supported by health care services, is the most important thing in our lives.

MHN is the national umbrella organisation bringing together over 40 health related organisations and represents over 12,000 families. [www.maltahealthnetwork.org](http://www.maltahealthnetwork.org)