

Interview of Agnès FIRMIN LE BODO

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Gradation of care in the healthcare system: a decisive issue

Gradation of care is a major issue given the shortage of medical resources. This topic was already part of the so-called *Ségur de la Santé* with the development of professional coordination, coordinated practice in health centres and in primary care teams and with multidisciplinary health care networks (CPTS). Local hospitals constitute the first level of gradation in hospital care: they represent the link between all players in the private sector, in hospitals and in medico-social facilities. The government's priorities are access to care, professionals' cooperation, task delegation and territorial organisation. Medical desertification is becoming a widespread phenomenon: in the next five years, all regions will be concerned, to varying degrees, by medical under-density. The issue raised is therefore: how to provide access to medical resources to all people in need? To this end, it is essential to move away from a supply-driven approach and to focus more on patients' needs by implementing pragmatic solutions suited to each territory's reality. These are the objectives of the National Council for Health Refoundation (CNR) in which all the players (health professionals, elected representatives, and citizens) will be able to meet and exchange. It is important that this system, in which elected representatives and professionals interact, be sustainable and reproducible.

The different players' roles need to be further reviewed

Task shifting is already underway with the increased responsibility of advanced practice nurses (APN). Although the Covid-19 health crisis enable the evolution of telemedicine, it stills needs additional progress. The overall organisation of the healthcare system is also evolving as rural mayors finally accept that doctors do not move alone in new municipalities. Given the training time of a doctor, i.e., about 10 years, it is even more necessary to encourage doctors to reach out to patients, provide outpatients consultations and use telemedicine. This lack of health professionals on many territories also leads to a widening of the scope of care. There is therefore a need to respond to territorial's primary care while making clear to local councillors that quality surgical care will be provided outside their municipality.

The development of primary care centres: a factor of attractiveness

To ensure the effectiveness of primary care centres in each territory, it is essential that these centres be developed by the physicians themselves in collaboration with locally elected representatives. It is now clear that health professionals want to exercise in a multidisciplinary environment. The professionals' desire for a multidisciplinary practice is legitimate as it allows patients to easily have access to specialists within the same facility. Yet, the issue lies in the way the "outreach" pathway is organised, more specifically for citizens living far from these primary care centres. How can we ensure they have fair access to care?