



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**TELECOMMUNICATION  
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU**

**ITU-D STUDY GROUPS**

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THIRD MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 2: GENEVA, 13 - 16 SEPTEMBER 2004

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***FOR ACTION***

Question 14-1/2: Application of telecommunications in health care

Question 17-1/2: Progress on activities for e-services/applications in the world  
(excluding e-health that is dealt with by Question 14-1/2)

## **STUDY GROUP 2**

SOURCE: SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS)

TITLE: MODERN ASCLEPIEIONS FOR CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT (MACE)

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### **Action required:**

To discuss and propose that this contribution be included in the guidelines.

### **Abstract:**

Modern Asclepieions are new types of the famous Asclepieions of the ancient Greek world where people were flocking for a cure. Asclepieions soon became places promoting health and culture in an integral and harmonious way. In Modern Asclepieions telematic technologies can make reality the concepts of `equity of access` and `citizen empowerment`, while at the same time social interaction and participation can be promoted for the benefit of all and, in particular, for the less privileged and those in need.

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## **Introduction**

The concept of Modern Asclepieion (MA) is to design, as part of city planning, large enough areas where the natural world can be related to health and culture<sup>1</sup>. These areas would provide attractive facilities, both outdoor and indoor, for all city residents and visitors so that they may have the opportunity to engage in 'activities', which will promote health maintenance, life-long learning, social interaction and cultural pursuits. In today's world, such services can be most effectively supported by the new scientific and technological innovations of the developing information society. Suitable infrastructures will need to be built for the effective and efficient exploitation of the opportunities offered by these new technologies.

The developments in telematic technologies, including e-health applications, are already providing new powerful products, processes and services for the solution of existing complex and chronic societal problems. As a result they will also facilitate the introduction of innovations in all the activities related to health, environment, welfare and culture.

The planned use of the new information and communications technologies can make all this possible and their implementation could translate the myth of *Asclepios* into a modern reality for all, irrespective of location and disadvantage.

## **Purpose and Scope of the Proposal**

The purpose of the proposal is to further study and describe the specifications of outdoor and indoor areas called Modern Asclepieions (MAs) where citizens can be offered services relating to health primarily and culture needs.

The concept of MAs can be envisaged as outdoor and indoor activity areas related to health promotion, education, environmental protection and awareness, cultural activities, arts education and training, in a framework outside the existing conventional systems. If properly designed, implemented, maintained and upgraded these areas can be more flexible, more efficient and possibly more effective than today's divided structures in providing citizens with the integrated, point-of-need services that they require.

It must also be taken into consideration that there is a rather large number of citizens that do not currently have the means and the opportunities to develop skills and exploit the potential of modern telematic technologies. MAs can be designed and operated in a way that can cover satisfactorily and efficiently the needs of those persons, in particular for health care.

**Citizen empowerment can be a reality in the setting of a Modern Asclepieion.**

The Greek activities related to MAs are currently supported by the School of Medicine of the University of Athens and a pilot project is in its initial phase. The electronic portals are in their first stage of development.

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<sup>1</sup> Variants of MA can be implemented in existing installations like athletic, school and cultural complexes etc. This might be more effective in countries where climatic conditions are not favorable for outdoor activities