

## Hasbani: “Guarantors Funds Should be Unified for a Universal & Comprehensive Health Care As for Hospitals, their Role is Essential in Medical Tourism”

Interview by Roula Rached

Deputy Prime Minister of Public Health “ H.E. Ghassan Hasbani ” expressed all the enthusiasm for the unification of the guarantor’s funds to cover health expenses. He declared to “Health and Human” that “The first thing I will suggest today in the Council of Ministers is to unite the guarantor’s funds. Yes, this is a political decision. Welcome to all those who want to stick with it. I’m doing my duty, at least joining the Civil Servants Cooperative, the National Social Security and the Ministry of Health money. I say money because we are not a fund but we take money from the State. This measure provides a considerable saving for the State and a high medical care level for all the Lebanese. I have no doubt that there will be many objections about the project. They will find thousands of arguments to prevent its implementations and to demonstrate that it’s not valid for implementation without mentioning the real reason”. He explains that the goal here is not to achieve savings. If the preliminary numbers show that there will be savings, maybe we will be obliged to increase spending. If we united the guarantor funds today based on the current cost only and without improving the performance, there will be a lot of savings. Hasbani declares that he is working on introducing many changes today and in the long term a universal health insurance not a health card. He added that in developed countries they monitor the bulk of spending on the health sector because it is considered as an essential and necessary measure in the community. If there is no good community, there will be no strong economy. He added that today, if we evaluate what is spent on health compared to the results, we notice that we have very good health indicators.”Minister Hasbani said that the private sector hospitals are taking a heavy burden compared to the public sector in the hospitals. The state has limited



expenses on health in Lebanon, as in all countries of the world. He said: “The relationship today is not good and needs to be corrected. Here is a letter to all those who are familiar, of course hospital fees for services are not high and not expensive. They have been determined since many years, and have not been modified for a long time. But at the same time, the volume of cash spending received by the state is quite significant”. “If we look at the health map and geographical distribution, we notice that the supply is roughly equivalent to the demand.” He believes that the financial ceiling set by the ministry per hospital is exhausted in such non-emergency and non-urgent cases in hospitals”. This is a malfunction and the hospitals have to correct it and cooperate with us to put in place controls for hospitalization, starting with procedures for hospitalization, he says.

The doctor responsible for admission of the patient to the hospital has to follow a specific protocol. This system

is being worked out with the Syndicate of Hospitals in Lebanon so that we can use family beds in hospitals in a better way. “From a positive point of view, I did not expect to find this size of the excellent human resources within the ministry; medical and technical capabilities,” Hasbani said. On the negative side, I did not imagine this amount of additional work on the load of the Ministry. In other words, there are additional burdens and tasks placed on the Ministry which are supposed to be the responsibility of others. I also have my own vision to develop the health sector. Within the Ministry, I found high technology capabilities that can be used more and more for development. Today, in the world, the health sector is the biggest beneficiary of the development and advancement of technology. The revolution in the technology industry is not in the service of developed countries with modest economies, but on the contrary, the first beneficiary ones are practically countries like Lebanon. He mentioned 4 stages of work in the ministry in order to provide service to the citizen, which is the cornerstone of the integrated health system presumed to be the basis of total health coverage. Minister Hasbani does not forget about the role of hospitals in Lebanon, especially the private ones, because it is essential in medical and hospital tourism. It is the main backbone of the Lebanese economy. The vision of Minister Hasbani and the package of solutions he holds for the health sector in Lebanon, which needs intensive care, was the core of the dialogue that he conducted with “Health and Man”.



It is not surprising that a Minister of Health, like Minister Ghassan Hasbani, coming from the world of technology and economy, to plan for the health sector in Lebanon, which unfortunately remained for decades neglected with limited possibilities and material. He has a quick and in-depth knowledge of all the details and mezzanine found in health, with a definite preservation of files and other numbers without any neglect of any details, especially, as humanity for him, is the starting point of any science depending on the grasp of the issues raised. All these are qualities of responsible leadership. Robert Goss, Dean of the Stanford School of Business, says:

*“In my opinion, Leadership is to assume absolute responsibility for the integrity of the institution and prosperity and seeks to change for the better; the real leadership is not a matter of place or influence or highness, but a matter of responsibility”.*

