



LEONA PEJCHAROVA, Czech Republic

CI Funding: upgrades

- Leona Pejcharová is mother of two bilaterally implanted children
- She is president of the Association of Cochlear Implant Users of the Czech Republic.
- Former leader of a project on the inclusion of hearing impaired children to the mainstream schools.
- She has a Master degree from the Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences in the field of European Studies

Free Upgrades: Opportunities, challenges and (hopefully one day) outcomes

Mgr. Leona Pejcharová

President of the Association of Cochlear Implant Users **(SUKI)**

Czech Republic

Starting point: 2011

- Difficult process:
- **It is necessary to insert new types of processors into the list of reimbursed items of the state insurance company's tariff but this is difficult**
- Patient had to pay more than 4,000 euro / 1 processor that was not covered by the state insurance company
 - Upgrades only once in 10 years period,
 - Unilateral implantations
 - Lack of knowledge by the employees of the state insurance company

For example: (Why can't you use less expensive speech processor of one company with the implant of another one?)

- **Endless negotiations with no result**

A brand new situation

- In 2016 Ministry of Health changes its attitude towards patient organizations and tries to help:
Foundation of the Patient Council – Official advisory board of the Minister.
- SUKI participates in a workgroup that aims to **adjust the list of the reimbursed items on the insurance tariff** to the real needs of patients
- Strong cooperation with the Czech Society of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery ČLS JEP and other partners

SUKI grew up in their eyes?

Two big achievements for us

2019 – Amendment to the **Public Health Insurance Act**:

- Shortening of the upgrade period: 7 years BUT only AFTER expiration of the original 10 years period in each case

2021 – Amendment to the Public Health Insurance Act:

- Free upgrades to the newest models of speech processors when a set of conditions (Nottingham scale) is met by the patient, if not then upgrade for free to an older type or pays additional 1,972 euro to get the newest one.

And what next?

- Remaining strong cooperation with all important partners
- **Next goal:** Upgrades for children under the age of 18 every 5 years
(= A new processor at the age of 6 when they start to attend school, then at the age of 11, when the volume of the curriculum increases, etc.)
- Commercial insurance is still very important as nobody gets a new processor earlier than once in 7 years. It is very expensive, though.
- **Patients still have to pay for everything needed such as cables, coil, batteries...**
- **What next? Always more to do.....**