



The Portuguese health system: sustaining the future in troubled times

Launch of the HiT health system review on Portugal

Lisbon, 10th January 2012 (13.30-17.30)

Background

The Portuguese population enjoys good health, increasing life expectancy and universal access to care through the National Health Service. There have been considerable health improvements in the recent two decades, partly explained by better access to an expanding health care network of public and private providers. Yet, there is also evidence that avoidable mortality is high compared to other European countries and that inequalities in health and access to care have increased among regions and social groups. One of the key concerns for the future is furthermore how to sustain the quality of health services and to keep investing in health and disease prevention in the context of a shrinking national economy and severe fiscal constraints as a result of both a global economic slowdown and the European sovereign debt crisis. Sustaining good and equitable population health and services coverage in the long run is challenging in particular in view of the progressive ageing of the Portuguese population which means an increasing economic dependency rate, a diminishing taxable income for health, a diminishing professional pool to care for health, and potentially an increasing demand on health services posed by patients with multiple diseases and disabilities.

The European Observatory is pleased to launch the newest health system update on Portugal. This report, which is part of a series of Health Systems in Transition (HiT) country profiles covering the entire European region as well as key OECD countries outside Europe, is produced by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies and provides a detailed description of the country's health care system and of reform and policy initiatives in progress or under development. The HiT health system reviews follow a common template and are written by country experts.

This update is the fourth edition. Arguably the situation in 2011 is fundamentally different to the times when the previous reviews were published in 1999, 2004, and 2007 when the global economic climate was more stable. Economic uncertainty can be an effective impetus to rethinking the future of the Portuguese health system.

Objectives

This event, which is hosted by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, aims to make a small contribution by presenting the strengths and challenges of the Portuguese system compared to other European countries and finding out how policy makers, experts and the Portuguese people will want to see their system organized, financed and provided in future.

At the meeting findings and conclusions of the 2011 Portuguese HiT health system review will be presented in the light of some of the main trends in health system reforms in Europe. In a round table debate on the future of the Portuguese health system some actors and stakeholders will be invited to give their perspective and engage into an interactive discussion with other participants.

The conference will be open to a wider audience of decision makers and actors in the Portuguese health system and the general public. Media representatives are invited to attend.

Documentation

A limited number of copies of the Portuguese Health System in Transition Profile and other Observatory material will be available. The audience will be given the opportunity to order additional copies.

The report is also freely available in English on the web site of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies at www.healthobservatory.eu

Language

Working language will be English and Portuguese.

Venue:

Reitoria – Auditório

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Campus de Campolide - 1099-032 Lisboa - Portugal

The **European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies** supports and promotes evidence-based health policy-making through comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the dynamics of health care systems in Europe and beyond. It engages directly with policy-makers and experts and works in partnership with research centres, governments and international organizations to analyse health systems and policy trends.

The European Observatory is a partnership that includes international organizations (the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the European Commission), national governments and decentralized authorities (Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, the Veneto Region, the French Union of Health Insurance Funds), and academia (London School of Economics and Political Science, and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine).



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PROGRAMME

January 10th, 2011

13:30 –14:00 Registration and welcome

14:00 - 14:30 **Opening - Welcome**

- Rector of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa
- Dean of the Nova School of Business and Economics
- Paulo Macedo, Minister of Health of Portugal

14:30 - 15:00 **International health reform trends in Europe**

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies and the HiT health system review as an analytical and comparative tool for health policy

- Josep Figueras, Director of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

15:00 - 15:30 **The Portuguese health system: challenges and opportunities**

- Pedro P Barros, Nova School of Business and Economics

15:30 - 16:00 *Coffee break*

16:00 - 17:30 **Round Table debate on the future of the Portuguese health system**

Chair: Jorge Simões, President of the Portuguese Health Regulatory Agency

Participants:

- Maria Antónia Almeida Santos, Chair of the Health Committee at the Portuguese Parliament (to be confirmed)
- Francisco George, Director General for Health
- João Carvalho das Neves, Director of the Financing Body of the National Health System
- Maria do Céu Machado, Department of Pediatrics, Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Norte, former High Commissioner for Health of Portugal

17:30 **Conclusion**