

Foreword

This report is the fourth of a new series of publications reviewing the quality of health care across selected OECD countries. As health costs continue to climb, policy makers increasingly face the challenge of ensuring that substantial spending on health is delivering value for money. At the same time, concerns about patients occasionally receiving poor quality health care have led to demands for greater transparency and accountability. Despite this, there is still considerable uncertainty over which policies work best in delivering health care that is safe, effective and provides a good patient experience, and which quality-improvement strategies can help deliver the best care at the least cost. *OECD Reviews of Health Care Quality* seek to highlight and support the development of better policies to improve quality in health care, to help ensure that the substantial resources devoted to health are being used effectively in supporting people to live healthier lives.

In many ways, Sweden's health and long-term care systems are regarded as exemplars to be emulated across the OECD. Yet an ageing population, increasing expectations of service users and diversification in how, where and when care is delivered are testing these systems' ability to continue delivering high quality care. To meet this challenge, Sweden needs to develop richer information systems, particularly by establishing a broader range of quality indicators in the primary and community care sectors, and explore ways of linking data from different sources to capture a more comprehensive picture of the patterns of care for individuals. A clearer role for central government is also needed, focusing on developing standards, building the evidence base and sharing knowledge. Local governments are the main providers of publically funded care: strengthening co-ordination and integration across services, encouraging continued innovation in how county councils and municipalities design and deliver services, and sharing learning effectively will all be vital in securing high quality and continuously improving care.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was managed and co-ordinated by Ian Forde and Francesca Colombo. The other authors of this report are Veena Raleigh, Caroline Brechet and Niek Klazinga. The authors wish to thank Stefano Scarpetta and Mark Pearson from the OECD Secretariat for their comments and suggestions. Thanks also go to Marlène Mohier and Lucy Hulett for their tireless editing and to Judy Zinnemann for assistance.

The completion of this report would not have been possible without the generous support of Swedish authorities. This report has benefited from the expertise and material received from many health officials, health professionals, and health experts that the OECD review team met during a mission to Sweden in December 2012. These included officials from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (with particular thanks to the National Board for Health and Welfare), and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (with particular thanks to Jönköping County Council). Many thanks also go to provider organisations and patient groups such as the Swedish Association of Health Professionals, the Swedish Medical Association, the National Pensioners' Organisation and the Swedish Stroke Association, as well as to other institutions and experts such as the national quality registers for palliative care (Palliativregistret), for preventive elderly care (Senior Alert), for dementia (SveDem), for hip fracture (Rikshöft) and for stroke (Riks-stroke), the Swedish Dementia Centre, the Swedish National Study on Ageing and Care, the Uppsala Clinical Research Centre, the Leading Health Care Foundation, Professors Mats Brommels, Carl Johan Fürst and Susanne Iwarsson and Dr. Ove Andersson.

The review team is especially thankful to Maria Nilsson, Eva Nilsson Bågenholm and Kent Löfgren the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs for their help in setting up the mission and co-ordinating responses to a questionnaire on quality of care policies and data. The report has benefited from the invaluable comments of Swedish authorities and experts who reviewed an earlier draft.



From:
**OECD Reviews of Health Care Quality: Sweden
2013**

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264204799-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2013), "Foreword and Acknowledgements", in *OECD Reviews of Health Care Quality: Sweden 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264204799-1-en>

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