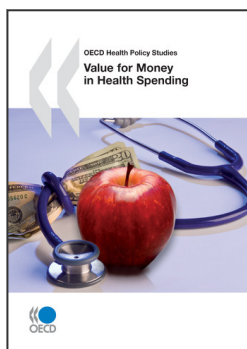


Foreword

OECD health ministers met in Paris on 7th-8th October 2010 to reflect on the tremendous progress made in the health of the populations of their countries, due in no small part to the improvements that have been made in health systems. But they also considered the difficult path they must walk in the future. Countries have to improve the value they get from the large and increasing investment they are making in health care. This is now all the more difficult – and urgent – in light of the difficult fiscal situation facing many countries in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

OECD countries have made tremendous strides in improving population health over recent decades. Life expectancy at birth has increased, rising on average by ten years between 1960 and 2008. Almost all countries have some form of public or private insurance covering the risk of ill health and high medical costs and access to basic health care has also improved. However, these achievements have not come cheaply – countries have confronted steady increases in the cost of health care spending over recent decades. Looking to the future, OECD countries will continue to face upward pressures on health spending from a number of factors including demographic change, advances in medical care technology and the growing expectations from patients and the electorate at large. What can countries do to get the most value for money while maintaining the goals of quality and access that people have come to expect? This report explores the different tools available to countries to increase the value of their health care investments.

This report reflects the contribution of colleagues from in and outside of the OECD. Michael Borowitz co-ordinated the report. Chapter 1 was prepared by David Morgan with assistance of Eva Orosz; Chapter 2 by Howard Oxley; Chapter 3 by Valérie Paris; Chapter 4 by Michael Borowitz, Professor Richard Scheffler and Brent Fulton from the University of California at Berkeley; Chapter 5 by Michael Borowitz and Maria M. Hofmarcher at Gesundheit Österreich GmbH; Chapter 6 by Valérie Paris, with the assistance of Rita Faria; Chapter 7 by Michael Borowitz and Elettra Ronchi. Marion Devaux provided statistical assistance for several chapters, and the text was prepared for publication by Isabelle Vallard and Judy Zinnemann. Authors would like to thank Raphaëlle Bisiaux for her assistance, and Tracey Strange and Marlène Mohier for their editing work. Many members of the OECD Health Division provided comments on one or more of the chapters. Mark Pearson, head of the OECD Health Division, supervised the preparation of the report and provided useful comments on various versions. Country experts and delegates to the OECD Health Committee were particularly active in making suggestions about the issues that needed to be addressed and providing information on national policies and evaluations.



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