



Thematic
analysis/diagnosis:
Healthcare system

Executive Summary

The Republic of North Macedonia (hereinafter: Macedonia) is one of the countries in Europe with the lowest amount of spending on public funding of healthcare and the citizens are burdened with a high degree of private spending despite the payment of health insurance contributions.

The basic principles on which the development of the healthcare system is based, which are incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, include the right to health and the commitment to universal, solidarity-based and equitable approach in organizing and financing the healthcare system, and striving for the highest achievable level of health regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, social status, or ability to pay. The core values include: health is a fundamental human right, health is the greatest asset, cross-sectoral approach to health and sustainable development.

The following weaknesses in the system need to be overcome:

- Excessive allocation of resources for expensive healthcare services in larger urban areas compared to basic care and preventive services.
- Inefficient and low quality services due to overcapacity, poor organization, poor regulation, weak law enforcement mechanisms, lack of management skills, lack of incentives,
- High private healthcare costs, such as informal payments to doctors, as well as payments for services, medicines and medical supplies that are not covered by the compulsory health insurance.
- Significant weaknesses in financial management and internal control.

The healthcare system in Macedonia, as elsewhere in Europe, has been evolving over the years. The healthcare systems of the future must be adaptable and flexible. Scientific development and clinical development are advancing at an ever-increasing pace. Population development and demographic development continue to evolve. Healthcare strategies must enable continuous adjustment and correction in the rapidly changing social and health environment, and not remain just a declaration on paper. The dynamics of change in healthcare are moving forward, faster and faster.

It is necessary to identify the key strategic issues and priorities and to identify a series of specific developments and actions aimed at overcoming the most important system weaknesses and paving the way for key modern development in terms of services and associated systems and, finally, progress in improving the health status of the population and the success of the healthcare system, both from quantitative and qualitative perspective.

It is necessary to use a framework based on services and key players – public healthcare institutions, primary healthcare, hospitals and other stakeholders: Population monitoring – health promotion – primary prevention – early detection of diseases – improved diagnostics – appropriate referral/utilization – appropriate treatment – emergency medical care – rehabilitation and follow-up care – secondary prevention – health maintenance.

Of course, it is necessary to have a broader social consensus for accepting the determinations for the growing needs for financing the overall, and especially public healthcare in the country, as well as understanding that the overall fiscal system should prioritize the growing needs for healthcare of the population in the short term, mid-term or very long term.

Due to future demographic changes and other factors that will affect healthcare and its financing (development of technologies, education of the required medical staff and the population) there will be continuous pressure for financial sustainability of the healthcare system. At the same time, attention should be paid not to violate the basic principles of healthcare, especially solidarity and equality of the insured.

Given the specific economic, social, political, cultural and other conditions in our country, issues related to the system, structure and sources of funding for public health in the future will become more complex and more sensitive.