

The Director

DIRECTORATE FOR EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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Dear Ms Ohov,

Health Ministers gave the OECD Health Committee an exciting set of mandates at their meeting in January 2024 on *Better policies for more resilient health systems*. We are delighted to inform you that we have been working on many of these. Meanwhile, countries are confronting a changed policy environment with economic uncertainties and tighter budgets, and work of the Committee in 2026 will reflect this changed landscape.

The Health Committee delivers in-depth analyses and data on health systems, leveraging the OECD's economic focus and unique cross-sectorial expertise. Under the 2025-26 Programme of Work and Budget, we are undertaking comparative policy analysis of health systems, to deliver comparative health statistics and support country health reform efforts. As you know, the Committee relies on voluntary contributions for well over two thirds of its budget and we are therefore looking for your support to ensure we can deliver this work. This year we will:

- **Advance plans for the next cycle of the Patient-Reported Indicator Surveys (PaRIS)**. More analysis of the existing PaRIS indicators and datasets will also help to shed light on the extent to which health systems are able to deliver the outcomes and experiences of healthcare that patients need.
- Identify the best strategies to **address health workforce shortages** in a context of growing demand linked to ageing populations, through improvements in health workforce data, evaluation of the impact of new technologies on training needs and productivity, and analysis of policies to improve job quality and skills.
- Deliver a sector-specific framework for the **responsible adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in health**, in line with discussions at the Health Ministerial meeting, as well as continuing work on health system digitalisation and the monitoring of the OECD Council Recommendation on Health Data Governance.
- Continue to **assess the performance of health systems** in line with the renewed OECD Health System Performance Assessment Framework, using relevant indicators to measure and address the most pressing health challenges countries are facing.
- Complete analysis on **why do women get sicker, but men die younger**.
- Continue to support **policies to ensure the financial sustainability of health systems** and improve the dialogue between Ministries of Health and Finance, through collaboration with Senior Budget Officials, recognising the need to balance further investments in health systems with a renewed focus on cutting waste in health systems and to improve tools for health budgeting.



- Support countries in evaluating the **health and economic impact of public health policies to tackle Non-Communicable Diseases including mental health** and in implementing best practices policies, including a focus on the factors affecting mental health for young people, continuing analyses to help move towards tobacco- and nicotine-free societies, and work on addictions.
- Support policies to manage **demographic change and its impact on the health of populations and on health systems**. This will include analysis and indicators on social protection in long-term care and policies for healthy ageing and dementia.
- Promote analysis and international co-operation on **medical supply chain resilience**, including metrics for supply chain vulnerabilities, and on the performance of the pharmaceutical industry, analysing unmet medical needs for pharmaceutical innovations.
- Continue to strengthen **our core work of developing comparable data** on health spending, the quality of care, patient safety, and other indicators of health system performance; and on modeling the cost-effectiveness of policies **to tackle health threats linked to infectious diseases**, including through further work on Antimicrobial Resistance and finalising analysis on tackling future epidemics with pandemic potential.

We continue to strengthen collaboration with the WHO, the European Commission, the World Bank, ISSA, the Council of Europe, and other international bodies to ensure that we operate to our strengths, avoid any duplication, and avoid overburdening countries.

High-performing and responsive health systems are critical for our economies, populations and societies, but they need to transform to fulfil their role. We need your support to implement the second year of work of the Committee's 2025-26 work programme. I hope that **Estonia** will be able to provide a financial contribution to support it.

Yours sincerely,

Stefano Scarpetta

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