

The Director

DIRECTORATE FOR EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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Ministry of Social Affairs
Estonia

DELSA/SS(2024)19

Monday, 08 April 2024

Dear Ms Ohov,

We are delighted that Health Ministers gave the Health Committee a new set of mandates at their 23 January 2024 Health Ministerial meeting on *Building better policies for more resilient health systems*. While we look forward to implementing these new orientations, which will be reflected fully in the next Programme of Work and Budget of the Health Committee, currently under discussion, we will continue this year to advance work that countries have already asked us to complete in the context of the 2023-24 Programme of Work and Budget.

To do this, the Health Committee delivers in-depth analyses and data on health systems, often leveraging the OECD's unique cross-sectorial expertise. Under the current 2023-24 Programme of Work and Budget, we are continuing to undertake comparative policy analysis of health systems, and to deliver comparative health statistics. As you know, the Committee relies on voluntary contributions for well over two thirds of the work and we are therefore looking for your support to deliver on this year Programme of Work and Budget. In particular, this year we will:

- Deliver the **brand-new results of the Patient-Reported Indicators Survey (PaRIS) survey**, some very preliminary findings of which have been presented at the January 2024 Ministerial meeting. The survey, which has recently finalised data collection in more than twenty countries, represents a critical milestone in the development of **a new generation of indicators that measure the outcomes and experiences of healthcare that matter most to people**. We will this year also look at starting planning for a next round of the PaRIS survey, in line with the January 2024 Ministerial discussions.
- **Finalise and release the recently developed resilience testing framework and methodology**, to support countries improve their preparedness to future shocks.
- **Further work on consolidating existing measures, and development new ones, to assess the performance, resilience, and people centredness of health systems** in line with the renewed Health System Performance Assessment Framework, using relevant indicators, to measure and address the most pressing health challenges countries are facing.
- **Continue work to ensure the financial sustainability of health systems** by improving dialogue between Ministries of Health and Finance, through collaboration with the Senior Budget Officials and the development of improved tools for health budgeting and transparent accounting of health financing at global level. The regular meetings of the OECD joint network of senior budget and health officials play a crucial role in balancing a need for further investments in health system resilience, with renewed focus on value-for-money, recognising the current state of the global economy.

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- Further work to encourage **responsible use of artificial intelligence in health**, in line with discussions at the January 2024 Health Ministerial meeting, while ensuring consistency across different policy areas and leveraging the OECD cross-sectoral synergies, as well as furthering ongoing work on health system digitalisation and the monitoring of the OECD Council Recommendation on Health Data Governance, in coordination with activities in other OECD Committees.
- Support reforms to respond to the impact that the **global megatrends of transition to a low-carbon economy and demographic change will have on the health of populations and on health systems**. This will include new analysis and information gathering on policies for healthy ageing and strengthening of financial protection for long-term care, and a new report identifying health policies that offer good returns in terms of both health outcomes and the environment, as well as on policies to deliver a low-carbon health system.
- Finalise analysis to identify the best strategies to **transform the health workforce, reduce health workforce shortages and improve the attractiveness of the medical profession** through a new analytical report, and expanded health workforce data.
- Continue and strengthen **our core work** developing comparable data on health spending, the quality of care, patient safety, and other indicators of health system performance; and **modeling** the cost-effectiveness of policies to **tackle public health threats** linked to risk factors and infectious diseases, including through further work on Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Prevention and Control of hospital acquired infections, as well the finalization of work on possible future epidemics with pandemic potential based on a newly created infectious disease model.

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

The recent OECD Health Ministerial meeting underlined the real transformative potential for health systems. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the world how critically important resilient and responsive health systems are to our economies, and our societies. But we need once more your support to allow the Secretariat to finalise the Committee's 2023-24 work programme, and to prepare to implement the new Ministerial orientations. I hope that **Estonia** will be able to provide a financial contribution to support it.

We look forward to your support so that we can better help you deliver better health systems.

Yours sincerely,

Stefano Scarpetta

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