

State of Health in the EU hits the Bullseye!

AIM subscribes to the conclusions drawn by this year's State of Health in the EU published on November 27th, 2019. These reports highlight the biggest challenges to be tackled by our healthcare systems in order to ensure access, quality and resilience. They look at trends in the transformation of healthcare systems in Member States. They are accompanied by a companion report that draws conclusions and issues recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of healthcare systems across the European Union.

Health promotion and disease prevention should be given the importance they deserve

AIM welcomes the attention given to health promotion and disease prevention in the reports. In terms of concrete recommendations, we are also convinced that *vaccination hesitancy* is a growing issue which requires a multi-faceted solution amongst which the most important one is enhanced levels of health literacy. AIM members, as healthcare payers, are actively involved in informing their members on vaccination. We are a member of the Joint Action on vaccination and wish to continue cooperating at EU level to improve coverage rates across the EU, as we are aware of the importance of collaboration between all stakeholders to solve the issue,

The opportunities and challenges of digital transformation

The reports also rightly mention the *digital transformation* and its big potential for health promotion and disease prevention. Big Data and Artificial Intelligence have a great potential in enabling the early detection of diseases and more personalized and targeted treatments. They can also be a solution to healthcare staff shortages. However, AIM would like to underline that the digital transformation also entails many challenges, amongst which data protection, patient safety, ethical questions and the interoperability of information systems. AIM looks forward to working hand in hand with the Commission and other stakeholders to unleash the potential of new technologies while keeping the health and well-being of citizens as a cornerstone of the digital transformation.

Towards Universal Healthcare Coverage

As healthcare providers, Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC) is the ultimate goal of AIM and its members. AIM therefore is pleased that the reports also highlight the need to strengthen the evidence base on access to healthcare. Given the recent and upcoming demographic changes and the transformation of our labour markets and new types of workers, UHC is increasingly put to test. Moreover, AIM calls for access to high-quality care for all. If healthcare is theoretically universal in many Member States, access to preventive services is often very limited for some parts of the populations like migrants or citizens from lower socio-economic backgrounds. AIM therefore joins the call for qualitative data on access made in the companion report as a first step towards developing more concrete actions for the achievement of UHC.

Evolving care models

Linked to the topic of UHC, is the shifting of tasks and change in skills mix in order to explore new ways of providing care. That aspect is, in AIM's view, a sine-qua-non condition to tackling the growing demand of notably long-term care services linked to population ageing. Moreover, it is also a logical change in view of the above-mentioned digital transition but also of the achievement of a more comprehensive and patient-centred care based on the health in all policies approach. At AIM, we are ready to contribute to the discussions on those new care models and on the evolution of skills which they require.

Accessible, safe, and affordable pharmaceuticals

Finally, the issue of safety, effectiveness and affordability of pharmaceuticals cannot be left out of the picture. Pharmaceuticals and medical devices play a vital role in the treatment of diseases. In 2016, pharmaceuticals accounted for at least 17% of total health expenditure in EU countries. Pharmaceutical and medical devices industries are therefore not only a key part of our health systems, but also important economic sector within the EU and worldwide. Currently, costs of newer medicines are becoming a challenge for more and more EU Member States, driving up healthcare expenditure and endangering solidarity-based access to healthcare. While the prices are high, the added value of these medicines is sometimes unclear at the time market authorisation is granted. There is therefore a need to rebalance economic and public health objectives. EU actions in the field of pharmaceuticals and medical devices should help Member States ensure fair prices so that all their citizens can access the pharmaceuticals they need. AIM will shortly present a model for the establishment of fair pricing of medicines to contribute to the discussions at European level.



AIM members provide compulsory and/or supplementary health coverage to around 240 million people around the world, including close to 200 million people in Europe, on a not-for-profit basis. Some AIM members also manage health and social services. Collectively, they have a turnover of almost €300 billion.

AIM members are either mutual or health insurance fund. They are: private or public legal entities; solidarity based; not-for-profit oriented organisations: surpluses are used to benefit the members; democratically-elected members play a role in the governance of the organisation.

Information: www.aim-mutual.org

• Contact : jessica.carreno@aim-mutual.org