

Providing for Health (P4H)

Initiative on Social Health Protection

Background

The large majority of people in developing countries do not have access to effective and affordable health care. Often governments are unable to raise the funds required to finance their health systems and to meet basic health care needs. This prevents many people from seeking health services or continuing their treatment. Building up the capacities of health systems and increasing social health coverage are top priorities to ensure the effective, efficient and equitable use of scarce resources.

Strengthening health systems through social health protection

Increased international funding for health has frequently focused on specific diseases or selected interventions. However, improving health outcomes also calls for long-term strengthening of health systems that include sustainable and equitable social health protection.

Thus there is considerable scope for improvement. How can targeted international interventions effectively contribute to setting up appropriate social health protection mechanisms with a view to achieving universal coverage? How can global initiatives best be aligned with existing social health protection systems? How can they effectively be integrated and combined with country-led strategic and innovative solutions for the reduction of out-of-pocket spending and the enhancement of financial risk protection?

Providing for Health (P4H) – Tackling Social Health Protection

Providing for Health (P4H) is an initiative that has been established and mandated to implement decisions taken by the G8 summits in Gleneagles (2005), St. Petersburg (2006), Heiligendamm (2007) and Toyako (2008) in support of strengthening health systems through social health protection for the whole population and particularly for the poor.

Objective of P4H

P4H aims to support countries with the development of social health protection systems by increasing financial protection against out-of-pocket payments, and thus to facilitate the utilisation of health services.

Key areas of P4H work

- Contributing to harmonisation and coherence of global initiatives
- Facilitating international and regional collaboration and exchange (South-South learning)
- Networking and alliance building
- Mobilising additional financial and technical resources for social health protection
- Supporting capacity development, e.g. for social health protection and health financing strategies that promote equity, efficiency and social inclusion; sustainable country level systems for social health protection; informed choices of people and demand-side support
- Provision of technical support for the design and implementation of social health protection strategies
- Research and innovation for insurance- and tax-based social health protection systems
- Advocating for the right of access to quality health care and social health protection
- Facilitating stakeholder participation and change processes

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution for social health protection. P4H will be country-focused. Its support for capacity development and the facilitation of change processes will be shaped by country demand, building on existing social protection mechanisms and strategies. Careful adaptation of regional and international experience, as well as sensitivity to stakeholders' values and interests at various levels will be pre-requisites for success.

The added value of P4H is based on the combination of international commitment and partnership and high level technical and local expertise.

How does P4H work?

The current core group comprises Germany, France, ILO, WHO and the World Bank. New members are welcome to join.

P4H works with a lean management structure and draws on the regional and country structures of its members.

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