

Trends on Health Reforms in Middle Income Nations

Daniel Maceira, Ph.D.

Abstract

Health systems reforms on developing countries during the nineties are subject to debate because of results disparities. The objectives of this study are: to analyze behaviour patterns within systems regarding per capita health expenditure and the public and out-of-pocket expenditures shares, and to set up a benchmark for the comparative analysis, its implications in terms of equity and insurance; and the risk transference and absorption between actors. Selective units include nations from Latin America (LAC), Eastern Europe (EEC) and South Africa. Information is gathered from World Bank and World Health Organization databases, as well as from a literature review about reform processes during the last two decades. With a per capita PBI media of US\$ intl. 12.000, deep differences in the Gini index are observed between LAC and EEC. Infant mortality gap is over the ratio 3:1 which is not necessarily associated to per capita expenditure, but to a greater participation on public sector. In EEC out-of-pocket expenditure (OOP) is lower than expected, while in most Latin American countries the participation of OOP is larger than the media, which corresponds with a relatively weak participation of public sector in financing health. The analysis of reforms in these nations provides for guidance for mutual learning and for a stressed convergence to a mixed model of provision, with regulated financing. Centralized public system in EEC is followed by a decentralized model and the development of private sector in services and insurance, needing regulatory safeguards. Segmented diagrams of provision and finance in LAC and South Africa give birth to models associated to risk selection, differentiated services packs and deficient structures to face catastrophic health expenditure. In both cases financial and sanitary risk transfers under a profound division of functions require an efficient regulatory benchmark to grant access and equity in provisions.

Mail to:

Daniel Maceira, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher
Center for the Study of State and Society (CEDES)
Buenos Aires – Argentina
danielmaceira@cedes.org