

National Health Systems

ABSTRACT

Health care systems ideally include universal access to comprehensive prepaid medical care along with health promotion and disease prevention. National health insurance and national health services of various models have evolved in the developed world and increasingly in developing countries as well. Some models used by a number of countries are based on principles of national responsibility for health, social solidarity for providing funding, and searching for effective ways of providing care. Various universal systems of health coverage exist in all industrialized countries, except in the USA. Health reform is a continuing process as all countries aspire to assure health care for all. Aging populations, increasing costs, and advancing and increasing technology all require nations to modify and adapt organization and financing systems of health care, health protection, and health promotion.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Student Competencies: Transferable Knowledge and Skills

The following are points of emphasis highlighting key principles that public health graduates are expected to understand and apply into practice. The key points arise from this chapter and other studies in specialized courses, seminars, readings during public health education, and continuing education. The selected skills and knowledge are divided into two parts. The first consists of core questions pertaining to immediate student requirements, while the second refers to competencies essential for successful public health practitioners. These include competencies recommended by the American Public Health Association in 2007, as well as those of the European Association of Schools of Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada's 2008 Report on Core Competencies. For more detailed competencies please consult the Association of Schools of Public Health website at: <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=851>

Part I: Core Questions

- What is the importance of the following in comparing national health systems:
 - GDP per capita
 - percent GDP spent on health
 - hospital bed to population ratio?
- What methods should be incorporated into national health systems to promote efficient use of resources and achievement of specified health targets?

- How can developing countries raise additional funding for health care, and at the same time work towards national health targets in meeting the needs of maternal and child health, controlling infectious diseases, and preventing chronic diseases?
- Discuss national policies aimed at the reduction of social inequalities in health in the USA.
- Describe the major international models of national health systems, including:
 - Bismarckian – employment-based compulsory social insurance
 - National Health Service (UK)
 - Semashko (Soviet model – state health service)
 - national health insurance – tax based
 - social security in the USA
 - Obamacare.
- Compare and contrast the models of the health care systems in the USA.

Part II: Knowledge and Skills

- Understand how subgroups within a population are differentially affected by their country's national health system.
- Conceptualize how a national health system can serve to increase or decrease existing social inequalities.

Topics for Student Review

- Describe the major international models of national health systems, including:
 - Bismarckian - employment based compulsory health insurance
 - National Health Service (UK)
 - Semashko (Soviet model - state health service)
 - National health insurance - tax based
 - Social Security
- What is the importance of the following in comparing national health systems:
 - GNP per capita
 - Percent GNP spent on health
 - Hospital bed to population ratio
- What methods may be incorporated into national health systems to promote efficient use of resources and achievement of specified health targets?
- How can developing countries raise additional funding for health care, and at the same time work toward national health targets in meeting needs of maternal and child health, control of infectious diseases and preventing the chronic diseases?

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