
SUMMARY REPORT: A COMPREHENSIVE COMPILATION OF POLICY BRIEFS

Forum for Health Policy 2019



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Foreword

Sometimes described as the best in the world, Swedish health care is facing serious governance issues. The primary challenge to sustained excellence in Sweden's health and social care system is coordinating care between hospitals, primary care, and local authorities. Additionally, the funding, quality and efficiency of the country's healthcare services and the ability to accurately monitor these measures remain important challenges in Swedish primary care and an area of concern for policymakers. One example is the frustration over long waiting queues due to a shortage of nurses and available doctors in some areas. However, the statistics on practising doctors and nurses show that, in an international comparison, Sweden does not have a shortage of trained personnel. The density of doctors is higher than in most comparable countries and access to nurses is close to the average.

In light of these challenges, Forum for Health Policy is an important and relevant think tank to provide new ideas and evidence for policy makers in order to improve the health care system. Forum, which is described below in the introduction, has a strong international presence, through various international collaborations. Therefore, in this report we present brief summaries of some of our published reports in English.

For more information on published reports and activities, please visit www.healthpolicy.se

For additional questions or future collaborations, contact us at info@healthpolicy.se

Thank you to Nishi Dave, Master in Public Health student at Karolinska Institutet and an internship fellow at Forum for Health Policy, editor of this report.

Peter Graf

Chairman of Forum for Health Policy

December 2019

Introduction

Forum for Health Policy (Forum), a Swedish think tank serves as a neutral platform for policymakers, researchers and healthcare providers to meet and facilitate discussions and analyses about important issues concerning the Swedish healthcare system. There exists a strong international perspective and focus on patient experience. The aim is to stimulate innovation, contribute to new ideas and support policymakers and politicians with knowledge regarding different health policy.

The Forum is piloted by its member organisations working in Swedish healthcare, elderly care and life sciences. These organisations include patient associations, personnel unions, pharmaceutical companies, medtech companies, non-profit and for-profit health care providers and others.

The Forum aims to strengthen interaction between policymakers, researchers and other parties in health policy area by focusing on five important activities which are highlighted below:

- An extensive network of researchers to help develop evidence-based structural and organizational options for future health care policies.
- Forum for dialogue where decision makers, researchers, patients and other parties can meet to discuss important issues in health policy.
- Publications of policy briefs and other articles.
- Engagement in specific projects that reflect and highlight major issues in health policy.
- Presence on the web and in social media, informing and stimulating discussion about the latest health policy issues, both nationally and internationally.

This report is a compilation of the English summaries of some of the policy reports and briefs published by Forum for Health Policy in the past three years. The aim of the report is to give English-speaking readers a brief overview and highlights of Forum's activities, so as to reach a broader international public.

Who governs the health care system?

As new healthcare systems and managements arise, major changes are also expected. In 2018, a report on the tension between effective healthcare policy and effective healthcare was published by Forum for Health Policy. The take-home message from the report was that for real change to take place in the healthcare sector, investment of political capital is necessary.

Following an election movement, which was largely characterized by health care queues posing as a major challenge in healthcare sector, a review was made in 2019 about the future of the healthcare system in place. This report is based on reviews of budgets, regional plans and on recommendations made in the previous report, centered around this theme as well.

The report focuses on how to steer towards the change that is needed. Based on the review conducted, the following dimensions require more planning and control for better healthcare management:

- Clearer priorities need to be set for the changes that are envisioned with clear communication
- Such changes envisioned in the above point, will need to be established in an economically pressured situation where it is necessary to create effective care to the increased needs
- The changes need to be built on business ideas with a new form of governance and leadership to create ideal conditions for business-driven changes to thrive

Mental Illness- how to reverse the trend?

The prevalence of mental illnesses such as anxiety and sleep problems to name a few, have been increasing greatly over the last twenty years. Not only does the illness affect the individual, but also has a great impact on the society in terms of healthcare costs. As of 2015, the costs of mental health interventions amounted to almost 5% of Sweden's gross domestic product (GDP).

Forum for Health Policy organised a workshop on March 13, 2019 with the theme 'Mental Illness- how to reverse the trend?'. Politicians, healthcare professionals, patients, psychiatrists, representatives from companies and academia were invited to attend the workshop. The workshop took place in collaboration with Länsförsäkringar (one of the biggest mutual insurance companies in Sweden). Discussion were held to identify the problems regarding mental illness healthcare, to get an overview of what role the healthcare system plays and lastly how could mental health illness be improved?

The recommendations highlighted below are based on the suggestions from the workshop from experts, patient representatives, healthcare providers, entrepreneurs and researchers. They provide an insight into potential policy recommendations that will help meet society's challenge of the increasing prevalence of mental health problems. The policy recommendations are as follows:

- Develop a long-term strategy with specific goals and sub-goals
- Speed up the preventive work in collaboration between different actors in healthcare and society
- Develop the quality and scope of care

Healthcare online- possibilities and challenges

Living in a fast-paced technological era, all our communication, both work-related and personal, often takes place using our smartphones or a digital communication device. Digital health often encompasses the use of technological tools and services to deliver and enable improved health services to the public. During June 2016 to May 2018, more than 400,000 digital health visits took place, meaning individuals used some form of digital healthcare service to seek healthcare. Despite an increase in number of digital healthcare users, digital visits accounted for only 1-2% of the total number of primary care visits per year. Nevertheless, the rapid development and use of digital health has sparked a debate on digital care.

On October 2nd, 2018, Forum for Health Policy organized a workshop entitled “Healthcare online- possibilities and challenges” which was attended by over 80 people such as representatives from patient associations, universities, counties, municipals, enterprises and healthcare providers. The possibilities and challenges associated with online care were discussed from three perspectives: online care for patients/users, for healthcare staff and for the healthcare system.

Some positive aspects raised from a patient and user perspective were increased accessibility, increased participation and equal care. Meanwhile, digital exclusion and risk of overdiagnosis were two of the challenges mentioned. Healthcare providers emphasized a well-functioning digital support as a prerequisite for creating a more individualized, flexible and modern working environment. In addition, the digitalization of administration enables more time with patients. Concerns about digital care being perceived as threatening by employees and managers in the traditional healthcare setting, the risk that digital care could lead to new information barriers and lack of knowledge was raised. Various positive aspects for the system were accentuated, not least increased efficiency and productivity and improved opportunities for personalized care. However, there were also concerns that digital care could contribute to over-consumption and non-effective use of resources.

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations were made by participants in the workshop:

- Create a vision for a modern health care system where digital technology is a natural integrated part
- Change perspective from organization to people
- Develop and adapt reimbursement systems
- Use digital technology to create modern working methods
- Modernize legislation

Health policy to create real change

The Swedish healthcare system is in the process of transformation. With several studies and investigations being conducted to study the healthcare system, voters rank health care issues as high in terms of what needs to improve. In addition, well-functioning healthcare is also ranked high when it comes to listing the desired attributes that would be crucial for Sweden to function at its best.

Independent to politics in healthcare, there is development in technology such as artificial intelligence based diagnostic support, digital healthcare development which is taking place in parallel to the healthcare politics. Healthcare is not only a public matter but also is dependent on politics. Often, there seems to be a lack of balance in effective healthcare policy and effective healthcare. The theme of this report was thus, to focus on this tension between effective healthcare policy and effective healthcare.

There is a need for politicians to be responsive to the needs of patients and businesses while refraining from comprehensive detail management, which is prevalent in today's healthcare management system. Political leadership is necessary to understand the need for reform. This power and reform are important in order to adapt the healthcare system to the potential of the technological development that is ongoing. Without the political leadership and effective reforms, the power of innovation is at risk of being slowed down, when the healthcare sector really needs it.

Successes and barriers for innovation in healthcare

Innovation in healthcare is pivotal to be able to provide healthcare services at a lower cost but with high quality for all patients. As per the latest European Innovation Scoreboard, Sweden is one of the leading countries along with Finland, Norway, The Netherlands and Switzerland. In Europe, each country has its own healthcare and innovation system with different characteristics. However, they often face similar problems such as technological, sociological, systematic or legal. Different actors from the healthcare field are often involved in bringing innovation to the healthcare field and constantly strive to improve it.

Forum for Health Policy organized an exclusive seminar on 7th March discussing aspects in healthcare such as barriers for innovation in healthcare, successes in innovation of healthcare and what can be learned from both. The seminar was organized with the embassies and chambers of commerce of the Netherlands and Switzerland. Researchers, entrepreneurs, patient representatives and officials from all three countries were invited to give their view on innovation in healthcare. A key problem identified was the lack of cooperation. Patients wish to be more involved in the innovation processes, whereas entrepreneurs need more cooperation with clinicians and patients in order to design appropriate products or services and healthcare providers need the expertise and knowledge from both entrepreneurs and patients.

At an organizational level it is evident that the healthcare system is lagging and needs to be modernized when it comes to regulations and reimbursement systems. There is also a need for a well-coordinated and systematic approach to both the innovation and implementation process. The following policy recommendations were discussed in the workshop and they are as follows:

- Strengthen dialogue and collaboration between different actors
- Involve patients in innovation and implementation
- Enhance reimbursement systems
- Strengthen the IT infrastructure
- Facilitate clinical trials
- Use innovation and new technologies to focus more on prevention
- Make it easier for healthcare and entrepreneurs to work together

Efficient coordinated healthcare and social services- is it possible?

Around 1 million individuals in Sweden, around 10% of the total population, have several healthcare needs and who also have reduced capacity to coordinate their own healthcare services. While many of these individuals receive care from informal caregivers such as family members, coordinating services for the patients remains a major challenge for healthcare service providers.

Currently in Sweden, counties oversee healthcare services and municipalities coordinate the care for the elderly. Both are more focused on single operations than on people with complex and extensive needs. For the latter, it is of utmost importance that services are well- coordinated as insufficient coordination is detrimental to patients and lowers the quality of care services. These shortcomings can also lead to higher costs, for example due to unnecessary repetitions of treatments and medical examinations.

Forum for Health Policy held a workshop to discuss problems regarding this topic on 13th February 2017 with the theme “Efficient coordinated healthcare and social services- is it possible?”. More than 100 participants including patient representatives, politicians, trade unions, healthcare and elderly care organisations, researchers and others attended. There were in-depth discussions which focused on key issues for improving the coordination between counties and municipalities. A follow-up roundtable discussion took place on 7th March to analyze the key findings from the workshop. Based on the conclusions from the workshop, roundtable discussion and valuable input from Forum’s research network, the following recommendations were concluded:

- Provide patients an opportunity to choose between private and public caregivers who organize both health care and social services
- Enhance reimbursement systems with incentives for integration of care and social services
- Strengthen the IT infrastructure for better communication between health care providers and with elderly care providers. Make it easier for eHealth entrepreneurs to share and develop new ideas that improve patients’ care.
- Implement mobile health care teams to a larger extent than today, preferably in a close cooperation between counties and municipalities
- Improve the patient discharge process from elective care at the hospitals (where the counties are responsible) to the elderly care (where the local municipalities are responsible).

Big Data – opportunities and challenges with digital health information

The technological age has given rise to a rapid increase in the amount of data that is generated and gathered in everyday life but has also provided tools to analyze and understand the data. The intersection of these trends is what we call “Big Data”. This data can be used for the development of healthcare and can lead to advances in the day-to-day operational dimensions of clinical procedures, pharmaceutical dosing, preventive health strategies and social care development. However, this increasing technological drive can also trigger fear among individuals and citizens that personal data can be misused and/or made public.

The value of data in healthcare and the challenges regarding privacy and integrity were discussed during the workshop organized by Forum for Health Policy and the Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis in September 2016. Several speakers held fruitful presentations shedding light on various aspects regarding the topic. The key note speaker was Peeter Ross, a professor of e-health from Tallinn University of Technology who provided an overview of the development in Estonia. Estonia has been at the forefront of developing a single national electronic medical record system which faces difficult data security and trust conditions. Individual citizens have direct immediate access to the electronic medical record over the internet and they must explicitly approve each individual or organization that is given access to their information. The individual electronic record also enables individuals to vote electronically as it is linked to a national electronic backbone.

The Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis underlined that more knowledge is needed about how patients, users and citizens perceive and relate to privacy issues. Based on the discussion held at the workshop, several recommendations can be successful made regarding the use of big data in digitalization of healthcare in Sweden. The recommendations are as follows:

- A regionally coordinated effort
- Strong leadership
- Targeted use of private sector capacities
- Improvement of quality assurance
- Improvements in focus of patient’s needs, privacy and preferences
- Increased cooperation on European and international level

What can Sweden learn from the Netherlands and Switzerland?

To compare is to learn and to develop. Benchmarking between various health care organisations is of great value in order to pinpoint areas of improvement. On the 19th of February 2017 Forum for Health Policy arranged a workshop in collaboration with the Embassies and Chambers of Commerce for the Netherlands and Switzerland with the topic of what we can learn from each other. Ines Coppoolse, Ambassador, Netherlands and Christian Schoenenberger, Ambassador, Switzerland opened the workshop by welcoming the speakers and the audience. Anders Morin, vice chairman of Forum, gave an extensive presentation with comparisons of quality, costs, accessibility, patient involvement from various sources (OECD, European Health Consumer Index, Common Wealth Fund).

There are three main areas where Sweden is falling behind: accessibility, coordination in health care and patient involvement. Professor Nikola Biller-Andorno from the University of Zürich and Professor Patrick Jeurrisen from the Radboud University of Netherlands presented features and current challenges from the two countries. The panel consisted of representatives with deep knowledge of health care. Many important issues were being discussed, for example the coordination of health care, patient involvement and insurance companies' roles on the health care market. Peter Graf, chairman of Forum for Health Policy, closed the seminar by stressing the importance of learning from each other.

Patients with multiple chronic diseases

One of the greatest challenges in the healthcare sector is care of patients with multiple chronic diseases. As a patient with multiple chronic conditions, costs of healthcare related expenditure often increase greatly in addition to increased patient burden in terms of lower quality of life. In terms of healthcare resources, approximately 50% of the total healthcare resources are dedicated for patients in this category. The delivery of healthcare services and care for such patients needs to be improved substantially. A patient in this group tends to have 2-3 chronic diseases and are between 75 and 87 years of age. From the patient's perspective and for their betterment, continuous care efforts between different healthcare actors such as emergency care, primary care, specialist care and municipal care should be well-coordinated.

Forum for Health Policy held two workshops focusing on this theme of challenges of care for patients with multiple chronic conditions. The aim of the first workshop was to get a clear idea of the concrete mechanism and measures in place for a well-functioning care process for the target group. Göran Stenberg an experienced organizational consultant from Prycocon AB gave an overview of some of the basic challenges regarding care for patients with multiple chronic conditions. Some of the challenges were that such patients often require coordination of care services from different healthcare actors, quality of care is lacking due to lack of coordination and it is vital to understand the individual's needs and wishes when planning for such care services.

The second workshop led to the development of another important aspect and the highlight of the workshop was that the use of care registries and the data should be enhanced to streamline and develop care that is well-suited for the patient. Examples of such use was demonstrated from Clalit's care system in Israel, which has around 4 million patients care data in a digital database. Based on the discussions held during the workshops, the recommendations are as follows:

- Use healthcare databases and registers to increase knowledge about care patterns for patients with multiple chronic conditions to improve quality of care provided
- Enhance collaboration between different actors in healthcare such as principal, individual health care providers and clinics for improved planning and better quality of care
- Develop remuneration models with incentives to create coherent care chains for elderly patients with several chronic conditions
- Prioritize the patient's needs over the organisation's needs and ensure that patients overall care needs- medical, social and individual- become the governing body for design of care

Research Network

Forum for Health Policy has an extensive network with collaborating researchers from different disciplines relevant to the health policy field. In 2016, this collaboration between the researchers was formalized to form Forum for Health Policy's research network. The aim of this network is to stimulate dialogue and science-based knowledge formation within the field of health policy. Additionally, the network also plays a key role to fulfill Forum for Health Policy's mission of strengthening interaction between decision makers and researchers. The members of the research network provide the Forum with current knowledge on relevant topics within health policy, provide feedback on Forum's activities and writings that are being developed in addition to being ambassadors for Forum for Health Policy. As of 2019, the following individuals are a part of Forum for Health Policy's research network:

Nasim Farrokhnia, MD, PhD, Digitalization/Karolinska Institutet (Chairman of Forum research network)

Anders Anell, Prof. Management / Governance / Organization, Lund University

Isis Amer-Wählin, MD, PhD, Remuneration Models / Innovation / Women's Health, Karolinska Institutet

Mårten Blix, PhD, Economics, Institute for Business Research (IFN)

Mats Brommels, MD, Prof Emeritus, Dep. Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics, Karolinska Institutet

Jon Engström, Service Design / Patient Involvement, Linköping University / SVID

Birger Forsberg, MD, Associate Prof. Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institutet

Henrik Jordahl, Prof. Economics, Public Economics, Örebro University and the Research Institute for Industrial Economics

Joakim Ramsberg, Ph.D. Economics / Health Economist / The Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis

Clas Rehnberg, Prof. Health Economics, Karolinska Institutet

Richard B. Saltman, Prof. Health Policy and Management, Emory University, Atlanta, USA

Vivian Vimarlund, Prof. Health/Informatics, Linköping University

Carol Tishelman, Prof. Innovative Care and Care, Karolinska Institutet

Ulrika Winblad, Prof. Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences, Uppsala University

Monica Winge, PhD, Computer and System Science, University of Stockholm

Members in Forum for Health Policy

Forum for Health Policy's membership base has grown since the past 5 years with new members being added to the network continuously. At the end of 2019, Forum for Health Policy had 21 members, all representing different areas within the healthcare field such as patient associations, employer's and trade unions to healthcare providers, companies, to name a few. The members finance Forum and are part of Forum's activities. The members work to drive important issues and contribute to bringing different perspectives to the table while discussing healthcare issues within the field of health policy. As of 2019, the following organisations and companies are members of the association:



Board Members and Team 2019



Peter Graf

Chairman, CEO of Tiohundra



Anders Morin

Vice-Chairman, Welfare Policy
Specialist at Svenskt Näringsliv



Ann Johansson

Vice -Chair at the Swedish
Association of Health Professionals



Björn Arvidsson

Managing Director at UppsalaBIO



Anne Carlsson

Health Consultant at Reformklubben



Livia Holm

Director of Policy and
Communication at KRY



Inger Ros

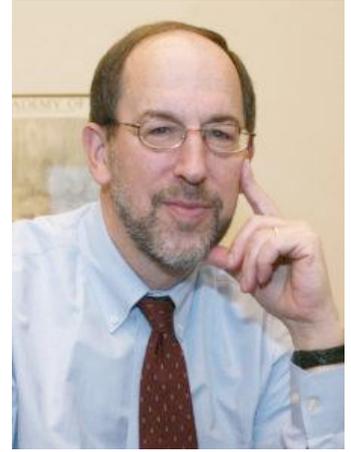
Federal Chairman of the Swedish
Association of the Heart-Lung



Catharina Barkman
Project Leader
at Forum for Health Policy



Mari Månsson
Project Coordinator
at Forum for Health Policy



Prof. Richard Saltman
International Advisor and Founder
at Forum for Health Policy



Daniel Anderberg
Ambassador (voluntary work)



Anna Forsberg
Ambassador (voluntary work)



Nishi Dave
Intern at Forum for Health
Policy

Statement from Senior Advisor

Presented below is a statement from Professor Richard Saltman of Emory University from Atlanta, USA. He is a professor in health policy and management and is the co-founder of Forum for Health Policy. With extensive knowledge about the healthcare systems of Nordic countries, Prof. Saltman provides an international perspective in Forum's operations.



“The last decade has seen rapid change in all facets of health care systems, driven by the impact of the ongoing information revolution on funding and management mechanisms as well as on the constantly changing international standard of clinical care. As in all revolutionary periods, the process of change is uneven, and there continues to be a great deal to learn from other health systems and their decision-makers. The Forum is a key channel in bringing new thinking on these complex issues into Swedish policy discussions.”

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