



Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé  
Direction générale de la Santé

# Addressing Health Inequalities in France

## Progress report

EU Expert Group on Social Determinants and Health Inequalities

29-30 October 2013, Luxembourg



- On-going work
- Advisory Authorities' statements
- Recent political statements



# (Some) previous landmarks

- 1946 Constitution
- 1998 Law for solidarity and against social exclusion
- 2002 Law on patients' rights
- 2004 Public Health Policy Law
- 2009 Law on hospitals, patients, health and territories
- 2010 Meeting on health inequalities
- 2010 Working document on public health policy...



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# On-going...

# Regional / local

- Orientations assigned to Regional Health Agencies (2011):
  - To improve healthy life expectancy
  - To promote health equality
  - To develop health and care services accessibility, quality and efficiency
- Local Health Contracts
  - Regional Health Agencies - local authorities
    - Prevention and health promotion : intersectoral policies (environment, housing, transports, employment, ...)
    - Access to care



# Health Impact Evaluation

- Joint Action
- Local experiments
- Meetings
- Training sessions
- On-line resources
- Sharing experiences

Workshop  
January 2014



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# Advisory Commissions



# High Council for public health

- Information systems for public health (2009)
- Social inequalities in health : going beyond fatalism (2009)
- Monitoring the evolution of social inequalities using health information systems (2013)





# High Council for the Future of Health Insurance

(Annual report : december 2012)

- Social inequalities in health can not be ignored
  - Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy differentials
- Primary concerns for the future of health insurance:
  - Financial access to health care
  - Geographical distribution / inadequate quality / utilization of health services
  - Need to compensate / correct for the effects of social determinants (living conditions, environment)



# Committee of the « Wise » recommendations (June 2013)

- Evaluate and coordinate, under the authority of the Prime Minister, the health component of public policies (education, housing, transport, city planning, work, ..)
- Give more weight to health in the evaluation of law proposals.
- Develop research on the social determinants of health inequalities, prevention, health services and on the evaluation of public policies.
- Develop the capacity to conduct Health Impact Evaluations



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# Recent political statements



# President of the Republic

## (October 2012)

- Our good health outcomes hide in fact profound social and territorial inequalities:
  - Life expectancy at 35 is 6 years lower for workers than for upper management
  - Obesity is 10 times more likely for children of the lowest socio-economic groups
  - Avoidable premature mortality is 60% higher in Nord-Pas-de-Calais than in Midi-Pyrénées
- We do not take sufficiently into account the risks associated with working conditions, social vulnerability, environment, alimentation



# President of the Republic

(December 2012)

- Inequalities are cumulative : those with the lowest income in the areas that are most affected by the economic crisis are the most likely not only to be affected by cancer, but to be out-of-the-way of prevention measures, health care centres or referral centres, so that the likelihood to die from cancer between 30 and 65 is twice higher for workers.
- (The new cancer plan) will therefore include measures to reduce occupational risks (...) and to reduce inequalities in information, screening, education, access to health care, treatment. The cancer plan will be a plan to fight inequalities.



# Council of Ministers

(January 2013)

- The health system is facing several challenges:
  - Increasing number of patients with chronic diseases
  - Increasing social et territorial health inequalities
  - High financial deficits leading to high social debt
- We also need to shift the balance of health policy toward addressing the determinants of health in education, housing, employment as well as prevention, health promotion and patient education



# Prime Minister

(Feb. 2013)

- Health is a foremost good, and the condition for all other goods, for each person's ability to exercise his talents and his freedoms, so that there can not be social justice without equity in health.
- How can we accept that a worker in France lives on average 7 years less than upper management ? How can we accept that in some areas women must wait twice longer than in others for a breast cancer diagnosis ?
- Health policy is not limited to health care delivery, even if it is essential. Population health also requires prevention and health education.



# Law proposal to guarantee the sustainability and fairness of retirement plans (September 2013)

- Retirement plans must take better account of those whose life expectancy is reduced because of the working conditions they have been exposed to.





# Minister of Health

## National strategy for health

(september 23, 2013)

- How could we ignore the fact that health inequalities are increasing again ?
- How could we accept that life expectancy decreases by 2 years from one end of the RER B line to the other ?
- The involvement of (almost) all ministries is indispensable.
  - Interministerial committee under the authority of the Premier
- The prevention policy will start from the earliest age and be pursued over the life course



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To be continued ...

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