



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Health systems, medical products and innovation
Performance of national health systems

Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health (2019-2022)

10th plenary meeting

24 November 2021

10:00-13:00h CET

MS Teams

Minutes

The tenth plenary meeting of the Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health (term of office 2019-2022) took place virtually on 24 November 2021. The meeting, which was a non-public meeting, was chaired by the Panel's Chair, Professor Jan De Maeseneer.

1. Welcome and introduction

The agenda was approved without changes, the minutes of the previous plenary meeting of 22 September were adopted in writing and had been published on the Expert Panel website.

Dr Gruson informed the Panel and the Secretariat that he became the Head of the Department of Laboratory Medicine in the University Hospital St Luc in Brussels.

No conflicts of interest were raised on matters of the agenda.

2. New mandates

Following a call for ideas to Commission services and to Panel members, the Secretariat received several potential topics for new mandates. The list of all topics was sent to the Panel prior to the meeting.

Taking into consideration the EU priorities and emerging issues related to COVID, SANTE has selected two topics, '*Facing the impact of post-COVID-19 condition (Long COVID) on health systems*', and '*Managing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) across the health system*'.

COM (M. Matthews) explained the background of the two topics and outlined the main aims of the new opinions and how they would contribute to the Commission's health policy agenda.

COM (V. Pendolovska) summarised the main objectives of the opinion on '*Managing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) across the health system*' highlighting that EU action on AMR had been on the policy agenda for many years. A wide range of measures has been put in place

to fight AMR and promote a more prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials in humans and in animals but a more systematic view on health systems linked to investment is still missing.

The aim of the Expert Panel opinion on this topic would be to support the Commission's work on AMR to be put forth next year, including a potential Council Recommendation on AMR. The Expert Panel would be mandated to provide an opinion focusing on how to improve AMR management in national health systems, taking a more systematic approach. More specifically, the Panel would be asked to come up with recommendations on translating existing AMR guidelines and surveillance data into effective implementation across health systems, and define ways to invest in health systems in order to improve antimicrobial stewardship.

Members raised several points which were also discussed in a breakout session, e.g. the inclusion of studies on behavioural science, on prescription behaviour, principles of implementation science to link available evidence and policy making, management tools/best practices, development of new antibiotics.

COM (F. Pratellesi) introduced the topic on '*Facing the impact of post-COVID-19 condition (Long COVID) on health systems*'. He highlighted that the estimated prevalence together with its significant impact on patients' quality of life and uncertain prognosis foreshadow a potentially large burden on national health and welfare systems in the future. At present, large knowledge gaps – including key information on patients' susceptibility and prevalence, as well as possible diagnosis and treatment approaches – hinder the design and implementation of cost-effective, evidence-based care pathways for this novel class of patients, generating barriers to care in most countries.

COM outlined that the Expert Panel would be requested to analyse the current literature on post-COVID-19 condition and make recommendations on how to assess the impact of post-COVID-19 condition on healthcare systems. The opinion and recommendations would provide guidance on how health systems can address this issue as well as highlight scope for additional research.

COM mentioned that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) was also working on the topic (two literature reviews, on adults and on children, with collaboration with European society of paediatric infectious diseases (ESPID)).

Members raised several issues, which were further discussed in a breakout session, among others evolving care pathways, not create inequality by disease, need of rehabilitation (also on community level), establishing a clinical case definition, including diagnostic criteria and health damage assessment (occupational disease), assessment of impact on health systems. They stressed the importance to diagnose the post-COVID-19 condition, improve diagnostic tools and capacity, and provide support and training to physicians to recognise the condition.

The chair rounded up the discussion concluding that the Panel agreed to work on the two proposed, highly relevant topics and invited members to inform Secretariat on which topic they wish to work. The work in the drafting groups should start early 2022. The opinion on AMR should be ready by summer 2022 so it could be used to support a possible Council Recommendation on AMR. The opinion on post-COVID-19 condition should be finalised in October 2022.

COM confirmed that the mandates using the input from the discussion will be finalised and circulated to the members in January.

3. Opinion on European solidarity in public health emergencies

The final draft opinion was circulated to members prior to the plenary meeting. The chair of the drafting group gave an update on the final draft.

The **opinion was adopted** and will be finalised by the Secretariat for publishing.

The fact sheet has been sent to the Panel for possible comments prior to the meeting. Taking on board the comments, the **fact sheet was adopted** and will be finalised by the Secretariat for publishing.

4. Any other business and next steps

DISSEMINATION OF OPINIONS

Members discussed the possibilities to promote and disseminate the recent opinions but also the Panel's work in general.

Recently the Chair and Rapporteurs of the drafting group on '*Mental health of the health workforce and other essential workers*' presented the opinion at the European Public Health Conference on 10 November.

At the same conference, Dr Rogers participated as a key speaker presenting the methodology of resilience testing at the workshop organised by DG SANTE entitled 'Getting real with future shocks: How to test health system resilience?' on 11 November.

Professor Pita Barros will speak and present mental health opinion at the meeting organised by the Committee of the Regions' Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing: "Supporting mental health in the EU in pandemic and post-pandemic" on 25 November.

Professor De Maeseneer will speak at the Value Based Roundtable on 'Improving patient care – Supporting resilient health systems' and present opinions on value based healthcare and public procurement on 7 December.

An article by Professor De Maeseneer has been published in Primary Health Care Research & Development 'COVID-19: using the crisis as an opportunity to strengthen Primary Health Care' where the EXPH opinion on 'organisation of resilient health and social care' was cited.

EXPH EXTERNAL EVALUATION

COM informed the members that the current mandate of the EXPH will expire at the end of 2022. Beyond that, the continuation of the Expert Panel requires a new Commission Decision. In order to prepare the next Commission Decision, COM intends to contract out an independent evaluation in the course of 2022.

Members asked about their expected involvement. COM explained that they might be contacted by a contractor for surveys or interviews.

2022 MEETINGS PLANNING

For 2022, three plenary meetings are planned on the following dates: 21 March, 23 June, and 26 October. The format of the meeting will be decided later, depending on the epidemiological situation.

Chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting.

5. List of participants

MEMBERS

BARROS PITA Pedro
DE MAESENEER Jan
GARCIA-ALTES Anna
GRUSON Damien
KRINGOS Dionne
LEHTONEN Lasse
LIONIS Christos
MCKEE Martin
MURAUŠKIENE Liubove
NUTI Sabina
ROGERS Heather
SICILIANI Luigi
WIECZOROWSKA-TOBIS Katarzyna
ZACHAROV Sergej
ZALETEL Jelka

ECDC

MONNET Dominique
BAKA Agoritsa
PLACHOURAS Diamantis

COM

PENDOLOVSKA Velina (SANTE)
MLYNARCZYK Anna (SANTE)
MATTHEWS Maya (SANTE)
PRATELLESI Federico (SANTE)
DAJKA Bela (SANTE)
MALMBERG Catarina (SANTE)
NUNES DOS SANTOS Joao Vasco (SANTE)
VOLOSINOVA Viera (SANTE)