



SESSION 4: Modifications to Purchasing Agreements in Response to COVID-19: A Case Study on Telemedicine

Date: Thursday July 16, 2020

Time: 8:00 to 9:30 am EST (USA and Canada)

Zoom meeting (with French, Spanish interpretation)

OVERVIEW:

In the face of increasing needs for COVID-19 related care, as well as populations forgoing essential care as a result of stay-at-home orders and fear of being exposed to the virus, countries have increasingly developed new ways to reconfigure their health service provision to both strengthen their response and maintain essential health services. One notable shift in many countries has been the substitution of in-person healthcare services with service delivery via telemedicine to allow patients to receive medical care through video, phone, text, and email.

Some countries are introducing arrangements to purchase telemedicine, including from private providers, for the first time, while others have seen a considerable increase in the amount of telemedicine services being purchased. Often in a matter of weeks, previously existing barriers to change have been overcome. The introduction of purchasing arrangements to support the adoption of telemedicine services is an example of where the urgency of the current crisis may be harnessed to drive ambitious and long-needed reforms that enhance health financing resilience and sustainability. The availability of telemedicine can lead to increased efficiency and patient responsiveness in the health sector of the future. For this to be the case, services under new delivery arrangements need to be purchased strategically and evaluated. The quality in health service delivery and the performance of providers need to be properly incentivized and carefully monitored.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

Through peer-to-peer collaboration and knowledge sharing among policy makers this session will explore key considerations for the strategic purchasing of telemedicine services beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It will use the example of telemedicine service provision to analyze how purchasing arrangements have already changed during the pandemic and how they need to be further modified to sustain service delivery innovation in the long term.

Among other things, this session will address the following questions:

- Which modifications to purchasing arrangements have enhanced health financing resilience and promoted the adoption and use of telemedicine services as a response to the COVID-19 crisis?
- How do the rapid response measures employed during the crisis, if beneficial during non-epidemic situations, need to be adapted to ensure their sustainability?
- Which obstacles with respect to quality assurance and monitoring do countries still have to overcome in order to be able to use telemedicine services towards their goal of achieving universal health coverage?



- Are there lessons for how strategic purchasing can be improved beyond telemedicine?

INTRODUCTION

Triin Habicht, Senior Health Economist, WHO Regional Office for Europe

MODERATOR

Marvin Ploetz, Economist, Health, Nutrition and Population Global Practice, World Bank

SESSION PANELISTS:

- Kartikeya Mishra, Special Secretary in the Finance Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, India
- Anthony Ofosu, Deputy Director General, Ghana Health Service, Ghana
- Fernando Pedro, Chief Medical Director, Amil - UnitedHealth Group, Brazil
- Aanu Rotimi, Program Manager, Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON), Nigeria