



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

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Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in Europe

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations congratulates the Regional Office and the Member States on their work ensuring financial protection. We acknowledge that health system monitoring is essential to support evidence-based decisions and effective policy responses.

Despite improvement in health care services, inequities in health still remain. As pointed out by the regional study, a significant percentage of the population is pushed beyond the poverty line by out-of-pocket payments, making the gap even wider. Ensuring the right to health and ending health-related poverty can be pursued through Universal Health Coverage with financial protection as one of the main focuses.

In Europe, out-of-pocket payments for medicines are a major cause of financial hardship and the increasing price of essential medicines is additionally one of the major challenges faced by health systems worldwide. We strongly encourage open discussion between nations, medical companies and patient groups, as we believe they required to bridge the financial gap in order to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

We would like to emphasize that reforms in the financing policies such as increased, but also more efficient and equitable governmental funding are required to achieve financial protection. Also, the IFMSA would like to emphasize that changes in the health system, taking all the six building blocks of a health system as described by the World Health Organization in regard, will bring us closer to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

The IFMSA would like to point out that health systems do not only serve to treat and prevent illnesses, but are also functioning as effective means to a country's economy. Moreover, healthy adults are more productive and healthy children perform better in school. This improves economic performance and enables economic growth to be sustainable and inclusive.

Therefore, we urge upon governments to ensure financial protection for all it's citizens, by increasing government spending as a fraction of total health expenditure, keeping out-of-pocket payments for healthcare at a minimum and facilitate transparent, equitable and efficient financial management systems.