

Convention on Health Analysis and Management

CHAM 2014

The State: Manager or Guarantor?

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1. The State of Guarantor

Is it the role of the State to guarantee equal access to care for all? Some would be tempted to answer yes to this question. In fact, the French system allows patients to access the doctor of their choice. As for doctors, they are very free in their practice.

The State guarantees access to care, in the public interest, and plays a regulatory role. Health cannot be defined as care, but also as access to care and above all the state of health of the citizens. With the correct information, 100% of the French population can access care. However, inhabitants in certain geographic zones face a decline in the medical population. They are therefore turning to hospitals, where accident and emergency departments are overcrowded.

2. The State as Manager

The State also acts as manager, given that social protection as a whole represents 700 billion euros in expenditure. Health expenditure alone amounts to 300 billion euros. At the same time, Germany spends 100 billion euros less. While economic indicators continue to stagnate, France continues to spend more.

3. The State as reformer?

Fundamental reforms are necessary in countries that are struggling economically. These necessary reforms must completely re-examine the roles and relations between the different players involved in medicine. In reality, successive governments make do with taking shavings off expenditure. This is both inadequate and at the limit of sustainability. Radical reform of the system, namely hospitals, is now necessary.

4. The State as Facilitator?

The State may be a guarantor, evaluator and manager, it must also play the role of facilitator, paving the way towards greater delegation of responsibilities to the different players involved. This greater delegation will require a better evaluation capacity moving forward.

5. Finally, the issue of the financial recovery of the health system

Rebalancing health system funding is not an unattainable objective, but requires positive political will on the part of the State and real dialogue that listens to citizens. Pride must be taken in the French health system, even if it needs reform. Because the health system is facing a financial crisis, crisis of performance and crisis of confidence. Yet it remains remarkable, thanks to compulsory insurance, supplementary insurance and CMU (Universal Health Care Coverage).