



EUROPE

Regional Committee for Europe Fifty-eighth session

Tbilisi, Georgia, 15–18 September 2008

EUR/RC58/R8
17 September 2008
82183
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Resolution

Behaviour change strategies and health: the role of health systems

The Regional Committee,

Recalling resolution EUR/RC55/R8 on Strengthening European health systems as a continuation of the WHO Regional Office for Europe's Country Strategy "Matching services to new needs", which called on Member States to elaborate their policy objectives guided by the WHO values and principles endorsed by the Member States, supported by transparent processes of monitoring and evaluation;

Recalling resolution EUR/RC56/R2 on Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region;

Acknowledging Member States' existing commitments and ongoing work under the European Strategy for Tobacco Control (EUR/RC52/R12), the Framework for Alcohol Policy in the WHO European Region (EUR/RC55/R1), the Second European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy (EUR/RC57/R4), the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (EUR/RC54/R3), and the European Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health and Development (EUR/RC55/R6);

Recalling World Health Assembly resolution WHA53.17 on the Global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, together with resolutions WHA56.1 on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and WHA58.26 on Public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, as well as Executive Board resolution EB117.R9 on Health promotion in a globalized world and WHA61.4 on Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol;

Acknowledging that epidemiological studies point to the fact that behaviour-related risk factors have become the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the WHO European Region and acknowledging the evidence that individual health behaviours cannot be seen in isolation, as they mostly are inextricably connected to the social determinants of health;

Mindful of the discussions and comments at the fifty-eighth session of the Regional Committee on the lessons learned and practical ways of strengthening health systems and the roles of health ministries and governments;

Having considered the documentation prepared for the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Health Systems: “Health Systems, Health and Wealth”;

Having reviewed document EUR/RC58/10 on Behaviour change strategies: the role of health systems in the WHO European Region:

1. COMMENDS the WHO Regional Office for Europe for raising awareness in recent years of a number of intersectoral health issues such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the International Health Regulations, environment and health, and counteracting obesity, and of public health in general;
2. ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts made by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in recent years to provide policy guidance and strategic direction in those areas, while linking them to health systems development in Member States in the WHO European Region;
3. URGES Member States to continue collaborating in the context of the WHO Regional Office for Europe’s Country Strategy by:
 - (a) identifying those areas of high public health relevance (such as smoking cessation, increased physical activity, balanced diet and minimization of the harmful use of alcohol) that would be amenable to (even limited) initiatives along the lines set forth in document EUR/RC58/10;
 - (b) using the necessary policy instruments and strategies such as regulation, education, motivational techniques, individual or group counselling and community capacity-building, as necessary, to work in synergistic ways in support of attainment of the health system goals set;
 - (c) ensuring the creation of one or more specific teams with clear mandates to explore both population health and personal health care policies and strategies on behaviour change linked to the health system, and to define the respective roles and responsibilities of ministries of

health and all relevant stakeholders in governance, financing and service delivery, including other sectors, as appropriate, in the interests of intersectoral collaboration;

- (d) facilitating access at national level to existing information related to behaviour change in the WHO European Region, in order to promote comparability and to facilitate the replicability of successful interventions in other settings;
 - (e) ensuring that such experiences are properly evaluated in terms of value for money, accountability and transparency, in order to generate evidence on the cost and effectiveness of behaviour change while working towards a more systematic linkage with health systems and the stewardship function;
4. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:
- (a) facilitate the exchange and sharing of experiences among Member States with regard to case studies and demonstration projects in the field of behaviour change in the WHO European Region and beyond, in order to document the critical health system-related factors that are at play, and to enable lessons to be learned and achievements to be replicated;
 - (b) take steps when so requested to support ministries of health in developing their competences to address behaviour change, including integrated multisectoral policies and strategies within their health systems;
 - (c) position the WHO European Region for the upcoming debates at the Sixty-second World Health Assembly on the report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health and the action plan for the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (World Health Assembly resolution WHA61.14 on Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy) and for the upcoming debate at the Sixty-third World Health Assembly on the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol (World Health Assembly resolution WHA61.4 on Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol);
 - (d) support robust and methodologically sound evaluation of the progress made at national and European level in this area (individual and population health, disease burden, health care costs and the critical factors for success in linking theory and practice);
 - (e) explore, with those Member States that have specific interests in the area, the main implications for health systems and the wider government response;
 - (f) report to the Regional Committee in 2015 on the support provided to Member States by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the progress made by Member States in the framework of follow-up to the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Health Systems, held in Tallinn in 2008.