



EUROPE

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND
TRANSPORTATION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
LAW AND BUSINESS
NATIONAL SECURITY
POPULATION AND AGING
PUBLIC SAFETY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
TERRORISM AND
HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

Support RAND

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore [RAND Europe](#)

View [document details](#)

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND Web site is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This product is part of the RAND Corporation technical report series. Reports may include research findings on a specific topic that is limited in scope; present discussions of the methodology employed in research; provide literature reviews, survey instruments, modeling exercises, guidelines for practitioners and research professionals, and supporting documentation; or deliver preliminary findings. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure that they meet high standards for research quality and objectivity.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Framework for assessing, improving and enhancing health service planning

Mihaly Fazekas, Stefanie Ettelt, Jennifer Newbould,
Ellen Nolte

Sponsored by the Bertelsmann Foundation

The research described in this report was sponsored by the Bertelsmann Foundation.

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2010 Bertelsmann Foundation

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the European Commission.

Published 2010 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1YG, United Kingdom
RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>
RAND Europe URL: <http://www.rand.org/randeurope>
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

Executive summary

Healthcare planning is widely seen as a core component of health system governance. It forms a key instrument for decision makers to influence and direct health service provision, a function which is likely to become ever more important as health systems in Europe are facing increasingly complex challenges that demand innovative solutions. How this is achieved best and in what circumstances remains however uncertain, given the variety of approaches adopted in different settings, often reflecting the wider institutional, legislative and political framework of a country's health system. However, there is considerable potential for policy learning across countries from the diversity of healthcare planning approaches in Europe and elsewhere. This report aims to contribute to this process through developing and validating a framework for assessing, improving and enhancing healthcare planning and so providing a tool for analysts and decision makers seeking to understand whether the approach of planning taken in a given setting supports its goals and how the approach can be improved in future.

We identified a set of criteria guided by an understanding of healthcare planning as an explicit process of defining objectives and goals and to devise strategies of how these objectives can be met. The criteria of the framework developed here can broadly be classified into three themes:

- “Vision” encapsulates the goals and objectives of healthcare planning, which should be aligned with the overall goals of health system governance, reflected in all areas of the healthcare system, and taking a long-term perspective.
- “Governance” refers to the role of decision makers and implementers to whom clear responsibilities should be assigned, the alignment of planning with sanctions and incentives that support implementation, the balance involved of relevant stakeholders, and the consistency of the approach at different levels of planning.
- “Intelligence” highlights the importance of the availability and appropriate analysis of relevant data, the existence of sufficient analytical and administrative capacity for these tasks to be carried out, and the need for continuous monitoring and measuring of progress against set objectives.

We tested our criteria empirically through an in-depth analysis of four countries, using a case study approach. Countries were selected to provide a range of types of government and healthcare system: Germany, Austria, Canada (Ontario) and New Zealand.

The analysis provides important insights into how different systems approach healthcare planning, identifying common challenges, but also differences highlighting the very

contextual nature within which healthcare planning as an instrument to directing health service provision sits. Thus, it will be important to understand the role and power of actors as powerful stakeholder interests are likely to undermine effective planning if there are no mechanisms in place that allow for consensus building and establish lines of accountability for implementation. Likewise, the most sophisticated planning tool is likely to be of little value if it is not supported by an appropriate governance structure.

Planning is also affected by a wider socio-economic context. Broad political goals, such as ensuring economic sustainability, have to be considered and weighed against the goals of healthcare planning. Given that different groups (e.g. providers, payers, patients) are affected by planning in different ways, a transparent, evidence-based and goal-oriented approach is desirable.

The framework developed here presents a first step towards developing a tool for assessing healthcare planning in high income countries. Further validation through applying it to a wider range of countries is desirable.