

European **Observatory** on Health Systems and Policies Series

Facets of Public Health in Europe

Edited by
Bernd Rechel and
Martin McKee



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Facets of Public Health in Europe



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The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies supports and promotes evidence-based health policy-making through comprehensive and rigorous analysis of health systems in Europe. It brings together a wide range of policy-makers, academics, and practitioners to analyse trends in health reform, drawing on experience from across Europe to illuminate policy issues.

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies is a partnership between the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Veneto Region of Italy, the European Commission, the World Bank, UNCAM (French National Union of Health Insurance Funds), the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.



European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Series

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies is a unique project that builds on the commitment of all its partners to improving health systems:

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The volumes in this series focus on key issues for health policy-making in Europe. Each study explores the conceptual background, outcomes, and lessons learned about the development of more equitable, more efficient, and more effective health systems in Europe. With this focus, the series seeks to contribute to the evolution of a more evidence-based approach to policy formulation in the health sector.

These studies will be important to all those involved in formulating or evaluating national health policies and, in particular, will be of use to health policy-makers and advisers, who are under increasing pressure to rationalize the structure and funding of their health system. Academics and students in the field of health policy will also find this series valuable in seeking to understand better the complex choices that confront the health systems of Europe.

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Foreword I

Governments across Europe are increasingly recognizing the need to strengthen essential public health functions so as to maximize their contribution to health, wealth, and societal well-being. This book brings together the most up-to-date evidence on public health practice in Europe, identifies areas where improvements are most urgently needed, and shows how these can be achieved. Leading experts throughout Europe address a broad range of topics, including health monitoring, health protection, healthcare, public health leadership and public health research. The chapters provide valuable insight for researchers and policy-makers seeking to understand the current situation and to identify future directions for public health.

A number of cross-cutting themes emerge from this volume. One is the importance of intersectoral working. The health sector can only address some of the determinants of health, and action by all sectors is required to improve the health of populations. As the contributions to this volume highlight, there are a number of strategies that can be used to achieve this aim, such as coalition-building across sectors, identifying shared objectives, and creating intersectoral governance structures.

Another key finding permeating this volume is the existence of wide inequalities between and within countries in Europe. Tackling these inequalities is of paramount importance for public health.

While this book makes an important contribution to our understanding of the state of public health in Europe, it also highlights an emerging research agenda. We still know too little about what public health policies and interventions are being implemented where and even less about which are most effective. Filling

these knowledge gaps will be important for stepping up efforts to improve public health. This volume provides a fascinating account of how far we have come and provides some essential signposts of where we might go next.

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