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I PANEL - Transforming Health & Care systems: effective tools and solutions for informing policy-making

How can we keep momentum on Health and Care systems, making an effective use of EU and national funding in this time of competing priorities? How can we build synergies and design evidence-based solutions to convince policy-makers, even beyond the usual suspects, that transformation of Health and Care systems is a major challenge of our times? How a renewed focus on prevention and continuity of care, as well as the need to tackle the health workforce shortage and fatigue, can help building resilience? Which tool and drivers can be effective in this endeavour? Which kind of actions can the research community put in place at EU, national and local level? These and other questions drove the discussion in this engaging high-profile panel.



Take-home messages:

EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility: a funding tool to drive transformation and improving Health Resilience through technology and workforce enhancement

- The EU has launched the Recovery and Resilience Facility to drive transformation, with a specific focus on improving health resilience. This initiative, developed in collaboration with the Parliament and Council, provides guidelines for investing in healthcare and care measures. A total of 43 billion euros will be invested, with 14 billion euros allocated for the digital transition in healthcare systems. The EU 2024 semester communication

highlights the connection between healthcare investment and productivity, and emphasizes the importance of complementing reform measures with the midterm review of cohesion funding. The role of artificial intelligence in healthcare transformation has been recognized, along with the challenges and implications it presents for the workforce. The interoperability of technology remains a concern, but the potential for productivity gains is significant. To address gaps in workforce data, new initiatives have been introduced. It is crucial for healthcare actors to understand technology, and understanding and addressing workforce challenges and implications are vital. Collaboration and efforts to enhance the workforce through technology and interaction with social care are important. The impact of technology on the workforce, including its effects on wages, is being studied to inform decision-making processes.

Emphasizing Collaboration and Context: key factors for successful implementation of complex health and social care reform

- To evaluate complex reform such as that who tried to combine health and social care and provide effective advice on implementation, evaluations should take into account the specific context, prioritize transparency and evidence, and aim to reach a consensus. It is crucial to emphasize compromise and collaborative work with groups rather than solely focusing on individual perspectives for successful reform implementation.

Closing the gap between research and policy-making: collaboration and trust as key elements

- Research is highly important in the workforce, but there is currently a lack of action based on available research. To bridge the gap between research and policy-making, collaboration between researchers and political decision-makers is crucial. Trust and dialogue are essential in finding a middle ground, and both top-down and bottom-up approaches should be considered. Furthermore, evidence should not just be seen as evidence, but also as a source of learning from implementation. Overall, there is a need for more research to support future actions, and the expectations and values of the new generations of workforce are changing the systems, posing a challenge in integrating research and policy-making.

Empowering regions for long-term success and involving different stakeholders in transformation

- The involvement of regions in strengthening their role and empowering them in transformation is essential for long-term vision and success. This involves bridging the gap between different countries, opportunities, and levels of richness. Resources and research at the local level play a crucial role in this process. The Partnership THCS is an example of involving regions to inform policy makers and requires political will and a strategic long-term approach. Civil society can support this by getting involved at both the EU and regional levels and empowering them to conduct more research. Collaboration between regions on prevention and working with the new generation of policy makers is crucial. The mental health approach by the EC brings together different dimensions and investments from the very beginning. Different stakeholders need to be involved in research to ensure effective transformation.

II PANEL: Transforming Health & Care systems: key ingredients of a successful implementation process

What are the key elements necessary to implement innovative and sustainable healthcare systems that meet the fast-changing healthcare demands of patients and communities? How can digitalization accelerate the transformation, improve access and overcome inequalities? What are the successful factors supporting the transferability and transferring of innovation across different contexts and settings? How can we better engage actors during the implementation phase? The discussion in this captivating high-profile panel was fueled by these questions and several others.



Take home messages:

Addressing the complexity of implementing change in healthcare: the opportunities from collaboration, mutual learning and organisational and cultural changes

- Effectively implementing change in healthcare is a complex research challenge. This partnership offers a unique opportunity to address research questions and bring together different perspectives. The success of healthcare programs and initiatives can vary by country, emphasizing the need for cross-country comparisons and innovation. Information alone does not lead to behavior change, making implementation of evidence-based practices difficult. Integrating effective implementation strategies into innovation development is crucial. Health systems must balance resilience and the capacity for constant change to meet their goals. The European Commission's support for collaboration and research on healthcare systems is valuable, and the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of continued learning and collaboration. There is a gap between clinical guidelines and actual practice, highlighting the need for improved

implementation efforts. This partnership can contribute to the sustainability of healthcare systems by better understanding implementation and change. People and process change are important for innovation, as well as organizational and service innovation. Understanding organizational culture and regulations is fundamental. The partnership can provide evidence to both policy makers and people within the healthcare system.

European Commission's focus on emerging technologies and implications for healthcare

- The European Commission is prioritizing initiatives in emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing, and new technology development. They recognize the significant potential of AI in various sectors, including improved cancer prediction and advancements in healthcare. The EC actively promotes knowledge exchange and collaboration through twinning activities, particularly in the field of genomics. It emphasizes the importance of considering the broader context and necessity of these technologies, rather than solely focusing on their capabilities. The EC is also providing funding for projects related to medical technologies using AI, with the potential to create Innovation Hubs. However, it acknowledges that further organizational and societal changes are required to achieve progress in these areas.

Transforming health and care systems: adapting, scaling, and innovating for better outcomes

- In order to successfully transform health and care systems, it is important to address challenges such as adapting to different contexts and scalability. This means being able to tailor solutions to the unique needs of different communities and populations, while also ensuring that these solutions can be scaled up and implemented on a larger scale. Additionally, it is essential to cultivate a culture of innovation within healthcare organizations and to invest in upskilling professionals. This will enable them to effectively navigate and leverage new technologies and approaches, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and better healthcare experiences for patients.

The role of industry, social culture, leadership, and collaborative partnerships in fostering innovation and research

- The healthcare industry is in need of innovative solutions to address strategic and operational challenges. Technological advancements like artificial intelligence and robotics hold great potential for innovation. Collaboration between different stakeholders, including clinical experts, data scientists, and digital infrastructure, is essential for rapid innovation. Innovation is not just about technology, but also about fostering a supportive social culture. Multidisciplinary and strong leadership at all levels are important factors in driving innovation. Private-public partnerships and investments are necessary to create the necessary space and capability for implementing changes.

Embracing technological, organizational, and collaborative approaches

- Innovation is not only about creating new products or technologies, but also about making changes in people and processes. It is important to recognize that organizational

and service innovation are just as important as technological advancements. Collaboration among all stakeholders, including patients and workforce, is necessary to ensure the success and sustainability of innovations. However, collaboration may not always come easily, and it is crucial to overcome barriers that exist within disciplines or the existing system structure. Regions also play a crucial role in supporting and promoting innovation, and healthcare systems can facilitate collaboration in this process.

III PANEL: Transforming Health & Care systems: Transformative ecosystems in THCS

Can the transformation of health and care systems take place if not nested in a wider ecosystem approach? Are there concrete cases in Europe where we can see examples of this systemic transformation? The Ecosystem Launch Event presented the work of THCS's WP9, showcasing examples of regional ecosystems and elaborating on key preconditions of successful transformation. A conceptual model for identifying true transformative ecosystems was explored and the tools and processes developed by THCS's WP9 were presented.



Take home messages:

- The THCS Transforming Health and Care Systems partnership has dedicated specific attention to strengthening ecosystems in health and care for supporting implementation and scale up (Workpackage 9, Strengthening Ecosystems). The mission of this effort is based

on the understanding that the actual transformation of health and care systems is dependent on the ability of numerous actors to align their goals and actions so that they are complementary. In the case of the THCS Partnership, the term ecosystem at a basic level is used as a broad concept of health and care stakeholders and other related entities, from regulators to end-users, from funders to service providers, from governing bodies to health and care professions, and from NGOs to enterprises and innovators. Ecosystem can be further defined along different dimensions, ie the level and scale of their activities, or the level of maturity.

- Compared to other ecosystem-related activities at the European level, THCS WP9 combines European-level collaboration among ecosystems – specifically transformative ecosystems – with continuous efforts to promote relevant ecosystem-wide approaches at national, regional, and local level. Keywords in this effort are collaboration, inspiration, learning, evolving.
- There is a wide range of definitions of ecosystems. In WP9, we have defined more precisely what we mean when we talk about transformative ecosystems. The challenge has been to create a robust enough definition that still enables us to recognize very different ecosystems and accepts variation. We have set our eyes on those ecosystems, which have the joint ability to create and implement transformation. We will approach partners to help us in identifying ecosystems with potential to inspire us all!
- The two cases presented in the session were excellent examples of the variety of transformative ecosystems. The most important takeaway from the examples and the panel discussion held was that trust is the most important resource for transformative ecosystem activity. In Grenoble, France, trust had been developed through decades of cooperation, and in Tesoma, Finland, the development of trust has been accelerated by an agreement creating an alliance where benefits and risks are shared among partners.