

Laaser U, Radermacher R, editors. Financing Health Care; Dialogue between South Eastern Europe and Germany. Lage, Germany: Hans Jacobs; 2006. 323 pages; ISBN: 3-89918-154-9; price €29.90

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Field: Health policy, financing health care.

Audience: Researchers, policy makers.

Purpose: To review the development in financing health care in seven eastern European countries (Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine) and to stimulate the dialogue between them and Germany.

Content: The book is divided into sixteen chapters. The chapter *Elements of the Health Care Financing Process* provides a basic overview of knowledge in financing health care with regards to the collection and pooling of funds and purchasing medical services. *The Benefits and Challenges of Social Health Insurance for Developing and Transitional Countries* discusses merits and drawbacks of social health insurance for low and middle income countries in comparison with other health financing options. It also exam-

ines the role of the state and the private sector in the context of social health insurance. Chapter *InfoSure – a Tool for Systematic Evaluation of Health Insurance Schemes* describes the InfoSure, a computer program used for comprehensive and structured evaluation of health insurance systems. *Third Option or No Option? Self – Help in Health Care* critically analyses self-help as an approach often prescribed by experts with the explicit aim of reducing government health expenditure. *User Fees in Health Care: Myths, Truths and Evidences* provides a theoretical and conceptual background of user charges and discusses practical experiences and effects of co-payments in both developing countries and the industrialized world.

The chapters six to thirteen (*Health Care Financing in Serbia; Health insurance System and Financing of Health Care in the Republic of*

Macedonia; Financing Health Care in Albania, Trends, Major Challenges and the Way Forward; Mandatory Health Insurance – a Challenge for Sustainable Moldova Health Care System; Recent Issues in the Romanian Health Financing System; Social Health Insurance in Bulgaria – Financial Aspects, Tendencies and Opportunities; Challenges Facing the Healthcare Legislation Reforms in Bulgaria in the Context of the Enlarged Europe; and the Ukrainian Health Care Legislation – Overview and Assessment with Regard to Models in EU Member States, Especially in the Field of Medical Standards) were written by Eastern European experts. They analyze health care financing systems in Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. This part of the book also comments the implementation of recent financing health care reforms in these countries and the challenges that lay in front of them in the future.

The chapter “*Care Regimes for the Elderly in South Eastern Europe in a European Comparative Perspective*” provides an international comparison of care systems for the elderly and provides arguments for a comparative structural analysis of the societies in question. *Quality Management in the German Health System* summarizes recent developments in medical quality management related to the federal reform legislation in Germany. It provides an overview on the infrastructure,

actors, and the current discussion concerning quality management in medical care. *Supplementary Payments by Patients toward the Cost of Dental Care – Germany in an International Comparison* discusses out of pocket payments for dental care in Germany and analyzes them from an international European perspective.

Highlights: Addressing the issue of sustainable health care financing is a public health matter of the utmost importance. At least 1.3 billion people worldwide lack access to the most basic health care. As a result, millions become sick or die every year from preventable or curable medical conditions. Therefore, the issue of achieving sustainable and comprehensive health care systems presents itself as vital to public health policy internationally. In the past fifteen years, Eastern European countries have been facing extraordinary challenges in re-designing their health systems. Germany, the country with the oldest social health insurance system (started by Chancellor Bismarck in 1883), has also had to deal with problems which seriously affected its health insurance, such as demographic trends and economic slow down. This book describes the recent developments in financing health care in Eastern Europe and provides several related examples from Germany.

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