Activity Brief

Sub-Regional Workshop on Health Accounts and Health Financing in the Caribbean: Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and OECS Member States

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
November 6-9, 2006

Background

Data on national health care and social protection expenditure is basic for the development of public policies in health and social protection. Composition of these expenditures and their sources of financing are key elements to evaluate the economic and financial feasibility of public policies regarding expansion of coverage and improvement of efficiency or equity. Harmonization of expenditure and financing estimates assures consistency in time series at the country level and comparability across countries.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop will contribute to the harmonization of expenditure estimates in the sub-region and in the strengthening of national capabilities to respond to challenges in the financial reforms of health systems in the following ways:

- Promote the exchange among professionals working on estimations of health economic and financial indicators at national institutions.
- Present and apply methodologies for the estimation of health expenditure and discusses and updates the estimates of expenditure on health. It also discusses challenges faced on the financing of national health systems among participating countries.
- Discuss recommendations to the ECC to promote the development and use of health economic and financing indicators in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public health policies and the development of the national health systems.

Methodology

During the first two days of the meeting, participants will attend the Thirty-First Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS). This exchange will favor institutional exchange and strengthen the interaction among country participants. It will be dedicated to the review of relevant economic, financial and investment statistics; also including population, demographic, social, environmental and living condition statistics for the region. These two days will be conducted within the framework of the SCSS.

The third and fourth days will focus on Health Accounts and Health Financing. Based on available data on national health expenditure accounts and health care financing patterns, participants of the workshop will be guided to prepare up-to-date estimates on overall national health care expenditure and financing, and will participate in simplified simulation exercises on
the expenditure implications of alternative policy scenarios. These exercises will focus on issues such as expanding coverage of existing national health programs, the impact of changes in the demographic and epidemiological profiles and/or alternative national health financing reforms on health care expenditures. Expenditure estimates will be produced using the same structure of concepts, classification and methods developed within the framework of each country’s System of National Accounts (SNA).

Simulation exercises will provide guidance on economic, macroeconomic, financial, and fiscal constraints that need to be addressed in order to achieve the desired national health policy objectives. Related issues addressed are as follow:

- National Health Expenditure and Health Care Markets: Correcting “market and government failures”
- Strengthening National Public Health and Health Care Systems.
- National Health Policy Objectives: Actual expenditure, public investment and public spending gaps.
- Financing alternatives.
- Macroeconomic and Fiscal constraints.

One session will be dedicated to the overview of policy issues, and technical and data constraints related to the development of more complex health accounting systems such as the development of Health Satellite Accounts; Health Systems/Services Satellite Accounts; Household Sector Satellite Accounts; Gender and Health; Satellite Accounts of Health and Social Security; and of Social Accounting Matrices (SAM).

Participants

All participants are required to be familiar with the use of Excel and country government budgetary processes and systems, and some basic understanding of the country System of National Accounts (SNA). While the focus of the workshop is on the development of tables on National Health Expenditure and Financing in accordance with international standard definitions and classifications developed within the framework of the UN’s International Family of Social and Economic Classifications, participants may also be assisted in the development of Expenditure and Flow-of-Funds tables which are in accordance to concepts and classifications being proposed in more management oriented accounting systems. These include the OECD’s Systems of Health Accounts and the WHO/World Bank/USAID Guide for Producing National Health Accounts with Special Applications for Low-Income and Middle-income countries. It is therefore recommended that participants may number up to three per country, and originate from the following institutions:

- Ministry of Health - The person responsible for the development of Health Accounts/National Health Accounts;
- Ministry of Finance - A professional who deals with the monitoring of budgetary accounting practices;
- Department of Finance, Budgeting / National Statistical Office - A representative from these offices, in charge of government finance and expenditure data;
- A member of staff from the national institution in charge of implementing the country’ System of National Accounts.
Support Institutions:

Ministries of Health, Ministries of Finance, Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) Caribbean Development Bank

Coordinators:

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

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1 The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank is the Monetary Authority for the Eastern Caribbean countries of Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent & The Grenadines