**Health spending set to outpace GDP growth to 2030, says OECD**

Health expenditure is projected to outpace GDP growth over the next 15 years in almost every OECD country, according to new OECD forecasts. Health spending per capita will grow at an average annual rate of 2.7% across the OECD and total 10.2% of GDP by 2030, up from 8.8% in 2018, according to a new OECD report.

**Health at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators** says that the United States spent the most on health care in 2018, equivalent to 16.9% of GDP, above Switzerland, the next highest spending country, at 12.2%. Germany, France, Sweden and Japan all spent close to 11% of GDP, while a few countries spent less than 6% of their GDP on health care, including Mexico, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Turkey at 4.2%. Most OECD countries spend around 9% of GDP on health, equivalent to about USD 4,000 per year.

Reforms to make health systems more financially sustainable in the long run are critical and Health at a Glance outlines areas where spending could be more effective:

* Increased use of generics has generated cost-savings but these only represent around half the volume of pharmaceuticals sold across OECD countries. Generics accounted for more than three-quarters of the volume of pharmaceuticals sold in Chile, Germany, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, but less than one-quarter in Luxembourg and Switzerland in 2017.
* In OECD countries, health and social systems employ more workers now than ever before, with about one in every ten jobs found in health or social care. Shifting tasks from doctors to nurses and other health professionals can alleviate cost pressures and improve efficiency.
* Reducing adverse events – critical for patient safety – can also save money. Yet almost 5% of hospitalised patients had a health care associated infection in 2015-17.

Health at a Glance 2019 also highlights some worrying patterns in health outcomes and unhealthy lifestyles.

On average across OECD countries, a person born today can expect to live almost 81 years. But life expectancy gains have slowed recently across most OECD countries, especially in the US, France and the Netherlands. 2015 was a particularly bad year, with life expectancy falling in 19 countries.

The causes include rising levels of obesity and diabetes that have made it difficult to maintain previous progress in cutting deaths from heart disease and stroke. Respiratory diseases such as influenza and pneumonia have also claimed more lives in recent years, notably amongst older people.

In some countries, the opioid crisis has caused more working-age adults to die from drug-related accidental poisoning. Opioid-related deaths have increased by about 20% across OECD countries since 2011, and have claimed about 400,000 lives in the United States alone. Opioid-related deaths are also relatively high in Canada, Estonia and Sweden.

Smoking, drinking and obesity continue to cause people to die prematurely and worsen quality of life:

* Unhealthy lifestyles, notably smoking, harmful alcohol use and obesity, – are the root cause of many chronic health conditions, cutting lives short and worsening quality of life.
* Whilst smoking rates are declining, 18% of adults still smoke daily.
* Alcohol consumption averaged 9 litres of pure alcohol per person per year across OECD countries, equivalent to almost 100 bottles of wine. Nearly 4% of adults were alcohol dependent.
* Obesity rates continue to rise in most OECD countries, with 56% of adults overweight or obese and almost one-third of children aged 5-9 overweight.
* Air pollution caused about 40 deaths per 100,000 people across OECD countries. Death rates were much higher in countries like India and China, at around 140 deaths per 100,000 people.

The report also shows that while quality of care continues to improve, more attention should be placed on patient-reported outcomes and experiences.

* A deeper understanding of quality of care requires measuring what matters to people. Yet few health systems routinely ask patients about the outcomes and experiences of their care. Preliminary results show improvements in patient-reported outcomes. For example, following hip replacement, an individual’s quality of life – in terms of mobility, self-care, activity, pain and depression – improved on average by around 20%.

**Health at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators**, together with country notes for Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States, is available at [www.oecd.org/health/health-at-a-glance-19991312.htm](http://www.oecd.org/health/health-at-a-glance-19991312.htm).

For further information, journalists should contact [Francesca Colombo](mailto:francesca.colombo@oecd.org), Head of the OECD Health Division, (tel. + 33 1 45 24 93 60) or [Chris James](mailto:chris.james@oecd.org), Health Policy Analyst, (tel. + 33 1 45 24 89 69) at the OECD Health Division.