

RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

European Health Management in Transition

Series Editors:

Federico Lega, Full Professor of Health Management and Policy, Director of the Research and Executive Education Center in Health Administration, University of Milan

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Healthcare is currently undergoing an unprecedented period of change, which is presenting a challenge to the fundamental tenants of health management and policy established over the last decades. The differentiated nature of the change agenda and the pace of change has been such that there has been limited space or time to provide a structured or comprehensive response, or to consider at a strategic level how health management teaching and practice should evolve and develop. This then is the focus for the *European Health Management in Transition* series, published in alliance with the European Health Management Association (EHMA).

Books in the series investigate how changes to the health and social care environment are leading to innovative and different practices in health management, health services delivery design, roles and professions, architecture and governance of health systems, patients' engagement and all other paradigmatic shifts taking place in the health context.

The books provide a roadmap for managers, educators, researchers and policy makers to better understand this rapidly developing environment.

Books in the Series:

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Axel Kaehne and Henk Nies (eds): *How to Deliver Integrated Care: A Guidebook for Managers*

RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

What We Know; What We
Should Do

BY

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And

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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FOREWORD

Why a book on resilient health systems?

Ça va sans dire.

WHO leaders¹ have noted: ‘COVID-19 has “unmasked” critical health system gaps and deficiencies. Health workforce shortages, broken supply chains, fragmented services and silo information systems are a few of the problems that hindered the response in the early days... This indicates that there is a need to rethink how public health and health care services should be organized and placed at the core of societal services, and to build people-centred health systems that are resilient to emergencies, through actions that include the following: 1. strengthening hospital capacities to handle significant influxes of patients associated with a largescale pandemic (ensuring sufficient capacity in terms of intensive care units and associated medical equipment, a trained health workforce and infection prevention and control measures); 2. providing high-quality protective equipment to frontline health workers and planning surge capacity in case of rapidly increasing demand for hospitalizations, but also for other core response functions, such as contact tracing; 3. equipping diagnostic laboratories and training laboratory personnel; 4. improving surveillance,

1 Hans Henri P. Kluge, Dorit Nitzan and Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat, A perspective from the WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Eurohealth* 2020; 26(2).

data collection and case investigation; 5. strengthening procurement systems, supply chains, operational support and logistics; 6. embedding strong risk communication and community engagement in governance; 7. accelerating research and development of tests, vaccines and therapeutics’.

Direction and road seem clear. The resources to implement the envisioned changes are coming through the recovery funds.

Yet, clouds are darkening the horizon.

Recovery plans developed and adopted by health systems are mostly focused on strengthening the organization and supply of community services. Fine. Better, great! More capacity (and hopefully also more capability).


But, adding ‘people and things’ does not make a health system necessarily more resilient.

The word itself, after being overused in the first months of the pandemic, has almost disappeared in the debate and conversation on recovery plan implementation. Even worse, not just the word has disappeared, but it seems that any roadmap and path necessary to strengthen the resilience of health systems has vanished.

This is why this book on resilient health systems is important, as it shows us how to make health systems more resilient.

Enjoy reading!

Milan, January 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Federico Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.