



Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2017 Global Monitoring Report



World Health
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PREFACE

This year's joint Universal Health Coverage Monitoring Report is being published at a crucial moment. Never before has there been as much political momentum for universal health coverage as there is right now. And never before has there been greater need for commitment to health as a human right to be enjoyed by all, rather than a privilege for the wealthy few.

Ensuring that all people can access the health services they need – without facing financial hardship – is key to improving the well-being of a country's population. But universal health coverage is more than that: it is an investment in human capital and a foundational driver of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. It is a way to support people so they can reach their full potential and fulfil their aspirations.

This is why we, as the leaders of the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization, have made the achievement of universal health coverage a priority for both our institutions. Part of that commitment is this joint 2017 UHC Global Monitoring Report.

The report reveals that at least half the world's population still lacks access to essential health services. Furthermore, some 800 million people spend more than 10 per cent of their household budget on health care, and almost 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty each year because of out-of-pocket health expenses.

This is unacceptable.

But what gives us hope is that countries across the income spectrum are leading and driving progress towards UHC, recognizing that it is both the right and the smart thing to do.

We are also encouraged that – although data availability and analysis are still a challenge – most countries are already generating credible and comparable data on health coverage. We would like to acknowledge the role of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in making this happen.

Our data have revealed major gaps. The more we know about those gaps – and how different countries are bridging them – the closer we come to identifying what we must do to improve health coverage.

But if the world is serious about meeting its goal of achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030, we all need to be far more ambitious.

To this end, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization are committed to working with countries to increase access to essential health services, ensure that people don't fall into poverty because of health expenses, and move closer to our goal of Universal Health Coverage by 2030. That won't be easy, but it's possible. We are ready to make it happen.

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