

Healthcare Systems and Policy

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1. Introduction

- A healthcare system is the organised network of people, institutions, and resources that delivers health services to a population.
- Health policy refers to the decisions, plans, and actions undertaken to achieve specific healthcare goals within society.

2. Models of Healthcare Systems

- **Beveridge model:** government funds and provides care through taxation, with most facilities publicly owned.
- **Bismarck model:** financed through employer and employee insurance contributions to non-profit sickness funds.
- **National health insurance:** public insurance pays private providers, blending features of both approaches.
- **Out-of-pocket model:** patients pay directly, common where formal systems are underdeveloped.

3. Building Blocks of a System

- The World Health Organization identifies six blocks: service delivery, workforce, information, medicines, financing, and governance.
- Strong financing and leadership are essential to ensure equity and sustainability.

4. Policy-Making Process

- Policy follows stages: agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation.
- Stakeholders include government, professionals, communities, and donors, whose interests shape outcomes.

5. Goals and Challenges

- Key goals are universal access, quality, efficiency, and financial protection from catastrophic costs.

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- Challenges include funding gaps, workforce shortages, inequity, and rising chronic disease burden.

6. Summary

- Understanding system models and policy processes helps health workers advocate for and operate within effective structures.
- Good policy balances cost, access, and quality to improve population health.