

EUROPEAN HEALTH FORUM GASTEIN – MAIN THEME 2019

A healthy dose of disruption? Transformative change for health and societal well-being

While we have made considerable advances in health, there are a number of areas that seem to be at a stalemate despite ample evidence on how to move forward. Examples include the topic of health reforms in general; tackling AMR; addressing health inequalities; advancing primary healthcare and making universal health coverage a reality for all. Even where robust frameworks and roadmaps are in place, for example to deliver on the Agenda 2030 Goals, often change does not happen fast enough.

This is a time of new beginnings, with a newly elected European Parliament, a new European Commission and a newly elected Regional Director for WHO-Europe on the horizon. The question is therefore timely: how to catalyse transformative change for health and societal well-being?

Do we need a healthy dose of disruption to make progress or to speed up processes of change? What are the catalysts and facilitators to strengthen primary healthcare, to train a new generation of doctors and nurses, or to create an interoperable eco-system for digital health? How can we guarantee equal access to innovative therapies, tackle air pollution or halt the escalating burden of NCDs, to name just a few central challenges in the modern age of health policies? In the political arena, we have recently seen major upheavals such as Trump's Presidency, Brexit and the growth of populist movements in Europe, exposing threats to the fabric of social cohesion. This highlights the importance of envisaging how health and social systems should function to be truly effective and efficient, and working towards the kind of society we want.

The era of disruption is upon us, and provocative action can catalyse change in areas where we are lacking momentum and leadership to expedite organic transformation. All sectors need to be actively committed to health-positive policies as they face their own hurdles. However, it is vital that actors are supported to develop the skills and expertise needed to embrace and navigate these opportunities and challenges - only then can we be prepared to ride the wave of disruption to better outcomes for all.

Come and join us for the 22nd EHFG, and help build capacity to navigate a better future for health in Europe in these volatile times.

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