

## *Foreword*

Our world is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Some might say that this is threatening and destabilizing, while others might say it is a world full of opportunities. But one thing is clear: we cannot ignore the constant change, whether technological or societal. This is also true for us as health policy-makers. But what stance should we take towards change: Accept? Adapt? Embrace? Or maybe actively shape and promote?

What if we ask “What kind of model of care do we want?” rather than “What model of health care does the technological advance impose on us?” And: “How can we include technology in a smarter, more effective and efficient organization of health care?”. What if we ask ourselves what kind of health care providers we want and which role we want to give to insurers in the future?

The hospital has always been key in the delivery of health care. What do we expect of the hospital of the future? How do we see its impact and role in the health system, in society and regarding the wider environment? We know that its role is changing. It is faced with challenges regarding integrated care for chronic patients, the concentration of medico-technical capacity and medical expertise, patient expectations concerning their care process, etc. The way we see the institution “hospital” will need to adapt to these evolutions.

As policy-makers, we should actively engage in this reflection, linking evidence, vision, strategy and action. The present study by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies will provide important contributions to this reflection. The study takes a unique perspective by observing different patient groups seen in modern hospitals: from young to old, from acute to chronic. Each chapter considers the provision of services for these patients and how these will need to change.

This book has the ambition to guide readers in their thinking about how care can be optimized in hospitals of the future. It wants to help in the understanding of care pathways, bottlenecks to care optimization,

workforce issues and future trends. Health policy-makers will benefit from gaining insights from the clinician's perspective on the current service landscape, ongoing change, and the need for further change. Likewise, the authors consider recent technological developments and address issues of changes in patient management – impacting hospitals, professionals and patient experience.

We would like to invite the reader to use this study as a basis for further reflection and to encourage this reflection to go beyond the existing; to think bold, transversal, across disciplines and diseases.

We wish you an interesting read!

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