



Stronger Together

A *Business at OECD* campaign calling for health resilience and foresight

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Business at OECD (BIAC) speaks for business at the OECD. Established in 1962, we stand for policies that enable businesses of all sizes to contribute to growth, economic development, and prosperity. Through *Business at OECD*, national business and employers federations and their members provide expertise to the OECD and governments for competitive economies, better business, and better lives.

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**This campaign
calls on governments
and the OECD to:**

Empower

01

populations, adopting a hands-on approach to health and making citizens champions of prevention.

Involve

02

economic, research, and employment ministers in all aspects of health policymaking as part of a whole-of-government strategy to make health systems both sustainable and resilient.

Incentivize

03

scientific progress and acceptance to build a better future.

Deepen

04

dialogue and partnerships with the business community to achieve resilience that will stand the test of time through a whole-of-society paradigm shift.

What COVID-19 taught us about resilience

Health systems are intertwined with countries' economic productivity and societal well-being. Resilience and preparedness are not luxuries but necessities. Although the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to COVID-19 as a global health emergency in May 2023, it is more important now than ever that we do not lose the momentum in our fight for health resilience.

Several risks including but not limited to novel pathogens, climate change, armed conflict, anti-microbial resistance, as well as chronic disorders still threaten the health of the global population. Only 2.7% of total health spending across OECD countries was used for prevention prior to COVID-19. To prepare against health shocks that could come anytime from anywhere, we must examine the lessons learned and adapt our health systems instead of waiting until it is too late.

In today's post-pandemic world, there is a real danger of complacency settling in, allowing us to revert to old habits and overlook the pressing need for systemic change. Yet, the world's swift descent into chaos during the onset of COVID-19 stands testament to the fragility of global health structures. It is essential that collectively, we recognize health resilience not just as a reactive measure, but as a proactive strategy, ingrained in our socio-economic and political frameworks, and a key for economic resilience as a whole. Investing in robust, adaptable, and inclusive health infrastructures means safeguarding not only against future health crises but ensuring the sustained growth and well-being of communities across the globe.

About our campaign

Our campaign features two pillars:

Showcasing what our national business associations and affiliated multinational corporations are doing on-the-ground to boost health resilience and promote sustainable approaches to health.

Transforming the insights from these initiatives into a coherent global narrative that these best practices underline: the international community can accelerate much-needed progress through public-private partnerships and an agile whole-of-government approach that involves more specifically employment, finance, innovation, and health ministries to incentivize prevention approaches and innovation pathways that will increase health resilience.

The OECD has a clear role to play: it provides an avenue for ministries to dialogue both with each other and with relevant stakeholders to find solutions to global challenges. The OECD methodology also applies to exploring links between health and economic productivity more clearly, actively involving the business community.

The first stepping stone is for future OECD work. Ahead of the OECD Health Ministerial in January 2024, we have consolidated private sector perspectives through this campaign, and are securing regular and substantive policy dialogue between government and business, as an effective and trusted solutions partner.



Business Recommendations:

How governments and the OECD
can make a difference

Invest in innovation: planning for the long-term starts now

For economy, research, and health ministries

Scale up public-private partnerships to help accelerate progress in achieving improvements in the health sector and to shape the approach from a corrective to a preventive one.

For economy, employment, research, and health ministries

Adopt a long-term approach on investment in healthcare by engaging the business community to outline what scientific innovations are needed in the next ten years and the required funding to accelerate their discovery and access. We stand ready to contribute to a regular platform addressing long-term opportunities, including leveraging the OECD Joint Network on the Financial Sustainability of Healthcare Systems to make it a trailblazing hub for international and regional collaboration to align countries' investment priorities.

Protect and incentivize the innovation ecosystem as a fundamental pillar for resilience, and together with OECD facts and guidance, outline how continuity of supply chains are fundamental elements to deliver new technologies for populations—both for infectious diseases and chronic illnesses, including cancer.

For the OECD

Provide evidence on the returns on investment and the economic and societal footprint that innovations and public-private partnerships in the life sciences sector bring and quantify their contributions to improving health outcomes.

Develop an economic case for the implementation of novel pull incentives for antibiotics that reward innovation and can help revitalize the pipeline.

Ensure sustainability through value-based and person-centered health approaches

For economy, employment, research, and health ministries

Promote and incentivize well-being programs in workplace settings to motivate, protect, and empower companies' workforce. Proactively assist SMEs—which tend to be disproportionately affected by shocks and crises—in looking after their own mental health, including through minimizing regulations and administrative red tape.

Change the way government administrations tackle mental health through multi-stakeholder and whole-of-government strategies to address related disorders.

For the OECD

Following its benchmark report on mental health, expand the data collection and sharing of best practices among governments and stakeholders to encourage more investment, tackling stigma associated with mental disorders, and horizontal action going forward.

Identify case studies that show how scientific progress and implementation of technologies in traditional and new healthcare settings depend on substantive and regular dialogue with business stakeholders, who are also pioneering initiatives aiming at unlocking environmentally sustainable approaches.

Apply the economic and health lessons the COVID-19 pandemic taught us

For economy, employment, research, and health ministries

Build effective Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPR) instruments that build on already-existing infrastructures. Aligning the roles of each stakeholder in such a system is key for speedy response when a pandemic strikes. These systems should incorporate forecasting models and real-time epidemiological data, and should not be burdened by administrative and regulatory red tape.

Update and simplify sector-specific safety guidelines that can easily be accessed and followed in the case of a future health emergency. Especially for hospitality industries and other “people-facing” sectors, explore and consolidate ways in which they can operate during a health emergency and maintain productivity so that complete shutdowns and struggles for recovery are not repeated to a devastating degree.

For economy, employment, research, transport, trade, and health ministries

Incorporate ways to protect existing supply chains from trade barriers and restrictions into PPR instruments. During COVID-19, swift measures to combat the pandemic were hindered by export bans and restrictions, leading to vaccine rollout complications, shortage of raw materials, and limited movement of skilled workforce.

For the OECD and economy, employment, research, and health ministries

Communicate through accessible and succinct numbers the effectiveness of immunization campaigns in reducing population health mortality and severe morbidity. Identify best practices and their related metrics on steps governments and relevant health actors have taken to address vaccine hesitancy and improve trust in scientific innovations.

For the OECD

Evaluate and report the sanitary and economic effectiveness of all possible virus containment measures that governments can use before resorting to lockdown measures using comparison data from the COVID-19 pandemic and analyzing their impact on people's mental health. It is a timely moment for the OECD to **take stock of what worked and what did not work** and to provide guidance on **best practice measures taking into account the overall context and specific circumstances**, so that countries are well informed of the available options and their own strengths and weaknesses to be **better prepared** for future health emergencies.



Make prevention a top priority

For economy, employment, research, and health ministries

Increase the percentage of government funding for prevention and screening programs, which at its current average of 2.7% of all health spending in OECD countries is disparagingly low, and invest in programs aiming to tangibly increase populations' health literacy and foster behavioral change.

For economy, employment, education, and health ministries

Partner with businesses to promote consumer education and healthy choices by leveraging private sector marketing skill, regular participation in sports, fitness and physical activity, options for self-care, and the paramount importance of early diagnosis, screening and care. Doing so will create concrete returns on investment and productivity as citizens will make informed choices that will reduce risk factors for both chronic and communicable diseases.

Healthcare systems should favor strengthening primary care, and include community pharmacies in these efforts to avoid potential serious treatment backlog built up if a future pandemic occurs.

For the OECD

Foster a "prevention revolution" in government plans on healthcare sustainability: establish communications best practices and principles that government ministries can use to mobilize internal and external stakeholders. Main messages should outline the critical role prevention and screening play in reducing the burden of both physical and psychological non-communicable diseases, which also negatively affect economic productivity overall.

Evaluate which partnerships work well, specifically what makes them effective in terms of outcomes, behavior change, and stakeholder involvement, to guide governments as they focus on prevention and early care. Include in the analysis how positive health messages carried by brands can help change consumer behavior.

Leverage digital tools to accelerate progress in health

For economy, digital, research, and health ministries

Invest in cybersecurity efforts for businesses of all sizes: both small businesses and multinationals are prone to potential attacks. Governments can incentivize the uptake of cybersecurity strategies in critical infrastructure operators.

For the OECD and education, digital, research, and health ministries

Show the benefits of using Electronic Health Records and invest in the re- and up-skilling of healthcare professionals and citizens through dedicated expert training centers and online technologies. Such upgrades can result both in greater worker satisfaction, and an overall improvement in effectiveness, transparency, and privacy protection standards for patients.

For the OECD and economy, digital, research, and health ministries

Accelerate the full implementation of the OECD Council Recommendation on Health Data Governance to ensure maximum interoperability—both within and between national health systems—and public trust ensuring data privacy and safe use of data.

Explore financing and incentive routes to increase the uptake of digital investments required to unleash the potential and value that telemedicine, medical apps, and related technologies bring, and incentivize the use of new digital technologies in healthcare settings to bridge the care gap between urban and rural areas through the adoption of targeted technologies including Tele-Intensive Care Units.

For the OECD

Explore—through a targeted publication—how citizens' new use of contactless and digital technologies could change the way information is communicated and evaluate the role of digital means to improve health literacy and achieve higher impact in prevention initiatives.

Explore our
members' contributions



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