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LTC network

Quality and cost-effectiveness in long-term care and dependency prevention



POLICY SUMMARY: FINLAND

Social service, health care and regional government reform, 2019

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Policy theme	Long-term care organization, integration of health and social care services in LTC
Design and implementation level	Nationwide, system level reform
Policy objective	Improved access to services, narrowing of socio-economic health inequalities, financial sustainability of the publicly-financed universal health and social care system, increase in patients' freedom of choice
Start date – End date	1 January 2019

Aims	Transfer of responsibility for the organization of social and health care services from municipalities to (18) regional governments; improved access to social and health care services by enlarging patients' freedom of choice to select between public and private health care provision; payment scheme based on risk-adjusted capitation and received treatment
Implementation	Major legislative changes including a Counties Act, an Act on Organizing Health and Social Services and an Implementation Act to implement the first two acts. New elections to elect regional governing bodies (first half of 2018). The parliamentary process began on 2 March 2017.
Target group	Whole population
Eligibility criteria	All citizens
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation – Federal taxation allocated to regional governments following predetermined criteria; no regional level taxation at the first implementation stage. All professionals working in social and health care services.
Performance assessment and monitoring	Pre-evaluation related to legislative changes. Due to the large scale of the health and social care reform, pre-evaluation is difficult. Nationwide implementation without time or geographical variation will complicate all efforts to evaluate the impact of the reform in the future.

Evidence of success (outcomes, quality, satisfaction, awareness)	Not yet available. Large investments in evaluation currently under consideration.	Expert opinion agrees that nationwide implementation without time or geographical variation will complicate all efforts to evaluate the impact of the reform in the future.
Transferability/ uniqueness	Unique initiative. Unsure whether other nations will have the appetite to attempt such reforms. Depending on the quality of evaluation practices this policy reform is	likely to yield unique and transferable evidence about the market mechanisms in health and social care.
Is this an emergent practice?	Currently in parliamentary process.	
Degree of innovation		
Sustainability	The reform will surely need continuous modifications but will define the organizational structure in social and health care for the foreseeable future.	Not clear whether the reform will improve the sustainability of public finances.
Critical assessment	n/a	
Academic literature on this action	Not specially on this action. Some scholarly work aiming to understand the introduction of competition and choice in health care	markets may help to understand the consequences of increasing choice on quality and costs.
Documents	All relevant material accessible (in English) through http://alueuudistus.fi/en/frontpage	