

National Health Plan 2012 – 2016

Preface

(January 2012)



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The National Health Plan (NHP) is the Health Planning instrument and resource which creates a framework for the goals, plans and strategies of all of those whose mission is to maintain, improve or recover the health of individuals or populations in Portugal.

Portugal has followed a significant path towards the development of Health Planning macro-instruments. The level of stringency set by the National Health Plan 2004-2010, with the establishment of indicators and targets, priority programs, an inter-ministerial monitoring committee and structures dedicated to its operationalisation and development, motivated Portugal to become one of the first European countries to carry out an external and independent evaluation of its NHP and Health System.

The current challenges of demographic transition, economic and environmental sustainability and globalization require that the Health Systems of the developed countries revisit and recast their goals and the object of their social contract.

This NHP proposes itself as a foundation for the Health System of the 21st century:

- It involves and addresses the Health System, collecting and framing the contribution of all, starting with the citizens and civil society, to achieve health gains;
- Its mission is to strengthen the ability of all health stakeholders;
- It creates a collective vision towards the development of the Health System;
- It recognizes and promotes knowledge innovation and management, gradually extending and cyclically upgrading itself, with a continuous search for the best medium and long-term solutions for the Health System.

The NHP has a very clear vision:

“TO MAXIMIZE HEALTH GAINS THROUGH THE ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINED EFFORTS OF ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY AND THE USE OF STRATEGIES BASED ON CITIZENSHIP, EQUITY AND ACCESS, QUALITY AND HEALTHY POLICIES”.

This vision is a direction with which all are invited to identify themselves.

Specific health questions demand specific health responses. Local needs, health plans targeted at specific problems, or the reform of parts of the health system can be found at this level. The NHP's mission is to provide a meaning and a larger framework, ensuring that the Health System responds to the needs, has the plans and resources it needs and optimises the impact of its reforms. Hence its strategic value.

Given its nature, the NHP proposes strategic actions. These are not all the necessary actions, nor all the priority actions. These are the actions, both strategic and structural, which will lead to a Health System more capable of achieving health gains for all. After the achievement of these levels, new actions will be necessary and relevant for the following steps on the development of the Health System. An active and dynamic NHP will ensure that its mission, value and contribution for the

Health System will always be invaluable.

To all those who have directly or indirectly contributed to this NHP a new invitation follows the acknowledgement and gratitude: may you help the NHP to fulfil its mission, by involving more stakeholders and individuals, continuing to bring stringency and contributions, as well as by being privileged stakeholders in its operationalisation.

Notwithstanding the monitoring, supervision and continuous assessment, this NHP will be technically and socially evaluated at the end of its validity. New lessons will be learnt, and Portugal will be able to start a new even more enriched cycle. We will be able to look back and ascertain the opportunities we have enjoyed, those we have created and those we were not able to respond to. May this NHP be a useful and essential guide, a common purpose and a convergent vision so that together we can do more and better.

For the health of all.

Lisbon, January 31st 2011

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Minister of Health