



Private Health Care: Developing Successful Policies and Programs

Purpose

Private sector health care is increasingly recognized as a significant part of developing country health systems. In many countries, private providers are the major source of treatment for important health problems, even for poor and rural populations, as well as being widely present in urban areas and for the affluent.

This course has been developed to help policy makers and program managers develop practical strategies to increase the positive and reduce the negative contributions of private health care to achieving priority health goals. Using a stimulating combination of theory and real-world experience, it provides useful concepts and tools for defining, measuring, and assessing the role of private providers in the health system and for developing appropriate policy strategies surrounding the private sector. A particular focus is the linkage between private providers and interventions to control or reduce important public health problems such as tuberculosis, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and children's infections.

Course Topics

The curriculum of the course includes:

- What is the "private sector" in health? Finance and provision, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations and providers
- Methods for assessing the size, composition, and activities of private health care in comparison with government
- The politics of public-private collaborations
- Going wrong and going right: fitting the right strategies to specific problems
- Case studies of successful policies and programs and their evaluation
- Planning for implementation

Who Should Attend

Participants will be national and regional health policy makers and planners, leaders of private sector for-profit and not-for-profit professional associations; program officers of international organizations; and directors of disease-control programs. The course will address issues in middle income countries, countries in transition, and the lower income developing countries with a multi-regional perspective.

Educational Approach

This course employs a blend of theory and practice and is geared to an audience focused upon implementation. Four types of sessions are planned: concepts and global overview, case studies, skills workshops, and participant-driven country planning exercises. Lively discussion among experienced participants is expected throughout.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own country material and resources on health systems related to private health care.

About the Course Directors

Prof. Peter Berman is currently Lead Economist-Health Nutrition Population for the World Bank in India and on leave of absence as Professor of Population and International Health Economics and Director of the International Health Systems Program at the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA. He is well known for his research on the role and development of private health care in developing countries, with numerous publications on the subject from developing and transitional countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

Dr. Birger Carl Forsberg is Lecturer, Division of International Health (IHCAR) in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. Trained in medicine, social sciences, and economics, Dr. Forsberg has worked in international health policy and program implementation since 1985, often with a focus on the control of communicable diseases and child health.