

Argentina: Health System structure and Information gaps



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Country's constitutional organization

- Country's Constitution has Federal structure.
- There are 24 provinces with their own provincial health authorities.
- Provinces autonomous of Federal Government in Health and Education.
- National legislation requires adherence from provinces to be effectively valid.

Healthcare facilities



- About 3.300 inpatient (hospitals) and 18.800 outpatient organizations.
 - ✓ 1.300 hospitals are public; 73.500 beds (55%, 56 beds each).
 - ✓ 2.000 hospitals are private; 60.500 beds (45%, 30 beds each).
- Excepting 3 special cases, all public hospitals and outpatient facilities depend on provincial health authorities.
- Of the 18.800 outpatient facilities, about 8.800 are public and 10.000 private.
- A low level of administrative decentralization; public organizations depend on provincial budget; directors cannot manage their staff.
- All public inpatient and outpatient organizations execute preventive national programs.

Coordination of policies among health authorities

- National Health Authority and provincial Ministers of Health periodically meet in the Federal Council of Health (CoFeSa*).
- CoFeSa is not a decision making body: is the mean for political agreements and action planning.
- As Ministers of Health are *executive* authorities, CoFeSa cannot decide on legislation;
- They are able to coordinate the execution of federal programs and share statistical information.

(* Acronyms in Spanish)

Government model of public hospitals: some contradictory features



- Public hospitals work with the *subsidy to supply* model.
- Public hospitals are available free of charge for the whole population.
- Universal health coverage (CUS*) for non taxpayer people is now being implemented.
- Public hospitals have administrative procedures for invoicing *fee for service* to insurance entities (Social Security and prepaid medicine).
- Public hospitals have not legal status (kept by the health authority that they depend on).
- As their public condition, hospitals are not licensed by any health authority.

Economical performance of private organizations



- About 2.000 inpatient and 10.000 outpatient private organizations.
- They work by invoicing their services to Social Security and prepaid medicine entities.
- Most of private inpatient organizations are small with a few beds and limited investment ability.
- Investments in diagnostic technology are concentrated in private outpatient facilities.

Availability of human resources



- A great overpopulation of physicians and other health professions, like biochemists, dentists, psychologists.
- About 175.000 physicians for 44 millions of population.
- 50% of physicians are specialized and 50% works like general practitioners.
- A relevant part of practitioners has not specific training and work as *not specialized* physicians.
- Less than 180.000 nurses: 11% university professionals, 41% professionals, 48% auxiliaries (including 5% empirical skilled).

Social Security structure



- Argentine Social Security entities, called *Obras Sociales* (OS's*), are non governmental and managed by trade unions of workers.
- About 270 OS's for formal workers and about 20 for senior staff.
- Additionally, 24 governmental OS's for state employees, that depend on provincial laws.
- A great governmental OS for retired people (PAMI*) with 4,8 millions enrolled.
- All OS's are relatively autonomous and work under regulations from the Superintendence of Health Services.

Prepaid Medicine entities



- Prepaid Medicine entities (EMP's*), comparable to American HMO's, are about 25 enterprises.
- They compete against the 20 OS's for senior staff to enroll the same higher income's social stratus.
- A small number of 5 entities leads this sector and they include healthcare delivery facilities.
- Another group come from health plans managed by foreign community hospitals.
- A relevant group of entities include pre-hospital transfer companies, mutual benefit societies and health plans of medical associations.
- Some EMP's manage special plans as third party for higher income beneficiaries of OS's.

Health Sector coverage share



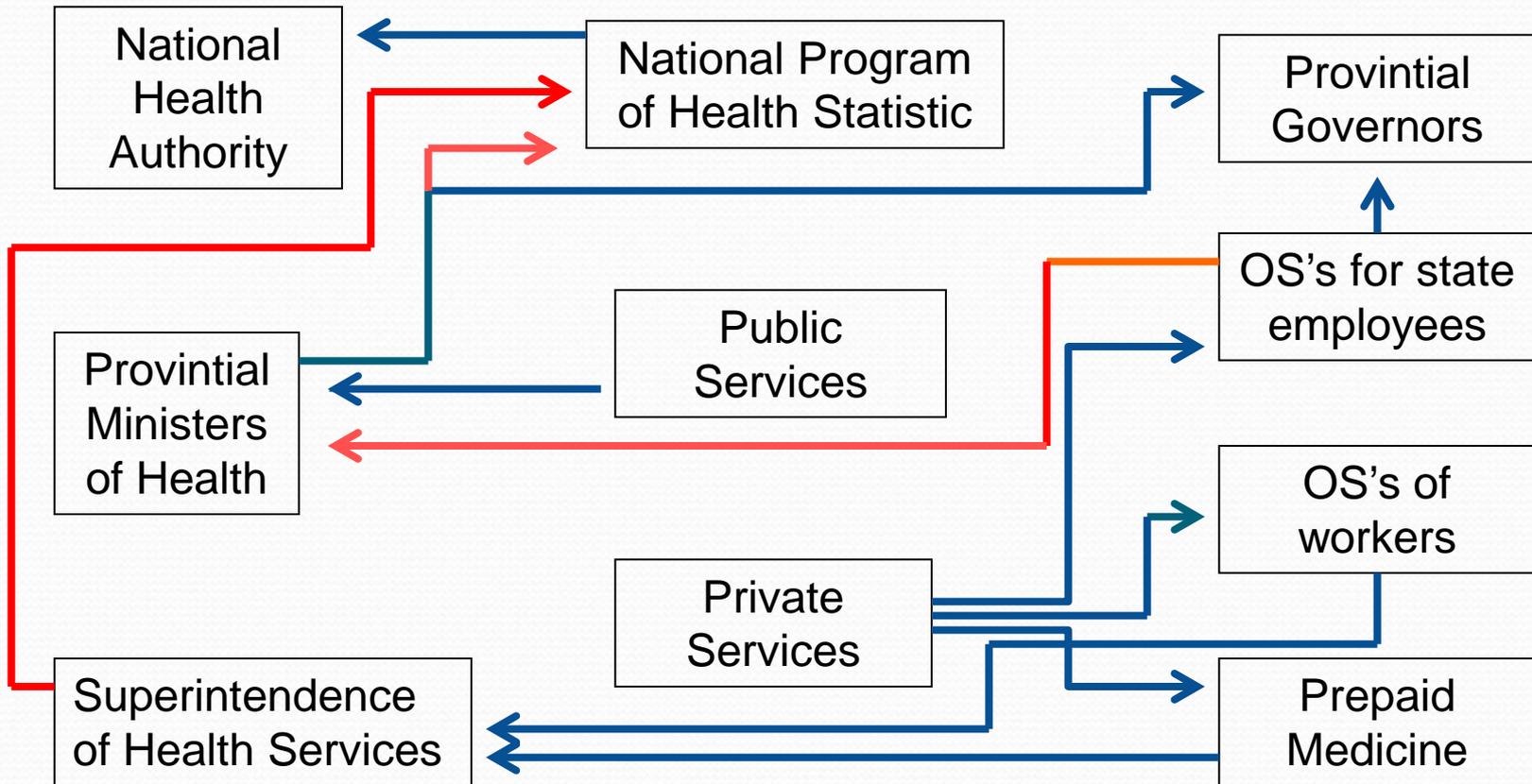
- On a total number of 44 millions of inhabitants, the coverage and usual healthcare delivery is:
 - ✓ about 17 millions are covered by OS's for formal workers and their families with a national wide scope;
 - ✓ around 6,6 millions by provincial OS's for state employees and their families;
 - ✓ about 4,8 millions are covered by PAMI, for retired people and their families;
 - ✓ around 1,8 millions are enrolled in EMP's belonging of the higher income population;
 - ✓ about 15 millions without any coverage are users of public facilities.
- There is a significant number of people enrolled to more than one coverage entity (more than 20% of covered beneficiaries).

Provider's associations



- Private providers of OS's and EMP's belong on professional associations.
- They manage administrative circuits between individuals and coverage entities.
- Provincial professional associations bring together private facilities, physicians, biochemists and dentists.
- Moreover, healthcare networks of independent providers manage their administrative offices (*gerenciadoras**).
- Professional associations or manager offices have an important role in the negotiations of delivery conditions.

Information sources and gaps



Summarizing



- Argentine Health System is pluralistic and fragmented in a country with a federal constitutional structure.
- Governance requires wide consensus processes among the health actors at many decision making focuses and levels.
- Global Health expenses are close 10% of the GDP; in 2017 estimated in US\$ 850 *per capita* (not possible now).
- Despite this great investment, outcomes (i.e. mortality rates) are worse than another countries with less expenses, like Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica.
- Many inhabitants of neighbor countries come to Argentina by looking for high technology and free of charge healthcare delivery.



Would Robin Hood be able to help us for solving our difficults in collect the whole information of the Health System?

Estatua de Robin Hood en el Memorial de Nottingham



Many thanks

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