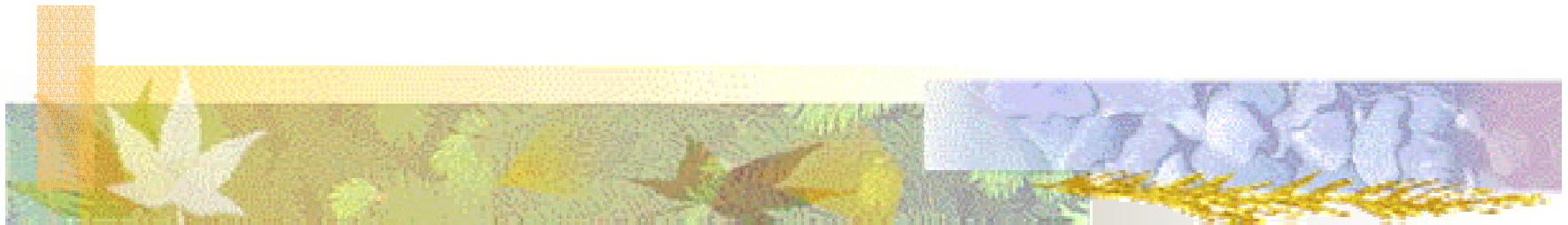


The Continuum of Care

Synopsis of Paper Commissioned for AIHA Conference



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Conceptual Framework

- Health Policy cannot take reductionist approach
- Care levels are ideally networked and not necessarily hierarchies
- Pathways in health care link service levels – outpatient – inpatient – long term care
- Health care system exposed to different levers for change – inside and outside



Comparative Overview

- Hospitals in ECA:
 - Covered a wide array of services in different geographic locations and levels of complexity
- Recent reforms:
 - Payments systems/DRGs
 - Bed reductions/hospital closings
 - Ownership and decentralization/devolution
 - IT and management modernization
 - Technology and equipment
- Training of HR:
 - Medical Schools, Management Schools



Improving Hospital performance

- Human Resources
 - Skill mix: MDs - RNs, Staff retention
 - Issue: “brain drain”
- Continuing education – quality?
- Private practice in public facilities?
- Infrastructure needs: downsizing vs. investing
- Appropriate technology: HTA
- Organizational change and quality of care



Restructuring Health Care Delivery

- Matters beyond closing of facilities or beds
- Duplication of services:
 - Republican – Municipal hospitals
- Substitution for PHC?
- Changing pattern of disease requires change in hospital structure and organization
- Integrated care pathways



Interface Between Care Levels

- Interface: filter and facilitate
- Two dimensions: inward and outward
 - Inward: requires functioning PHC
 - “gate keeping” function
 - Outward: appropriate discharge and follow-up (referral patterns)
- Culture of communication between care levels



Developing PHC

- Status change required
- Need new focus on Medical Schools
 - Quality of training, care paradigm
- PHC as patient management through care levels
- Revisit where care was provided and at what levels of complexity
- Family Medicine concept versus Policlinics
- Link to health promotion, new public health (vs. old Sanepid system)



Implementation of Reform

- Context
- Consensus
- Stakeholders
- Implementation responsibility
- Complexity
- Resources
- Impact



Lessons Learned

- Take account of reform context
 - Resources – what to buy?
- Coordination of financing and planning
 - Important levers for system change, markets?
- Engagement with appropriate stakeholders
 - Many failures due to disregard for political economy
- Alignment of incentives
 - Payment systems as levers for productivity, quality
- State stewardship
 - Legal and regulatory framework – state responsibility