

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

New report urges policymakers to heed consumers' health quality agenda

Concerns over rising healthcare costs and rising national expenditures on health care have led to intense political debate in many European countries over the appropriate level of government spending.

The Health Quality Agenda, a new report by the Stockholm Network, re-evaluates the way in which rising health care expenditures are understood and argues that policymakers are yet to take full account of the changes in consumers' demand for healthy lifestyles – be it diet, exercise, body image or general wellbeing.

Based on creating a basket of seven health-related goods and services, we compared health and wellbeing spending in the UK, the US, Canada, Japan, Germany, France and Italy and drew the following conclusions:

Health and wellbeing spending is substantial:

The global health and wellbeing sector was estimated to be worth \$1 trillion in 2007.

Health and wellbeing spending is growing:

If we take the UK as an example, we see exponential growth across the board:

- Sales of over-the-counter medicines in the UK have experienced a **58% growth** between 1997 and 2007.
- Sales of physical exercise equipment in the UK have experienced a **678% growth** between the 1990s and the 2000s.
- Sales of organic food in the UK **doubled** between 2000 and 2005.
- Spending on complementary and alternative medicines in the UK **grew by 961%** between the 1990s and the 2000s
- Spending on cosmetic surgery **increased by 1150%** between the 1990s and the 2000s.

The report finds that our desire for health and wellbeing is growing in a hitherto unprecedented manner –and this is set to keep growing.

As demand for health care in both the private and the public sectors is only set to grow, policymakers will need to find ways to tap into this private willingness to spend on health, in order to ease the pressures on public spending. The public's desire for universal and equal coverage, combined with high standards of health quality, may feasibly only be achieved by a combination of public and private spending.

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For further information on the Stockholm Network, please visit: www.stockholm-network.org

For the full report and executive summary:

http://www.stockholm-network.org/downloads/publications/The_Health_Quality_Agenda.pdf

Notes to Editors:

The Stockholm Network is the leading pan-European think tank and market-oriented network. It conducts research in the fields of health and welfare, energy and environment, intellectual property and competition. It also offers a unique network of 130+ market-oriented think tanks across Europe providing access to the best European policy thinking.