

Methodology of the formation and implementation of state policy on the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space

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Abstract

A set of organizational and methodological provisions of the state policy for integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space has been substantiated. The symptoms of the problem of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been identified; they characterize the current state of the national healthcare system, and their resolution is one of the key requirements of the European Union. The systemic problems of implementing the state policy on integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been defined; these issues create obstacles to fulfilling EU requirements and, in some cases, have caused a crisis in Ukraine's healthcare system. The initial principles of state policy on integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been formulated. The key objects of state policy (human resources, infrastructure, and financial support) and the mechanisms for managing them (legal, organizational, and financial) have been determined.

Keywords: state policy; healthcare system; European integration; medical space; public health; healthcare reform; policy implementation; healthcare management; international cooperation; medical standards.

1. Introduction

The state policy of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space is an important element in fulfilling Ukraine's obligations to the European Union. «Despite the implementation of the reforms in Ukraine's healthcare system, difficulties in the realization of state policy in accordance with European requirements still remain. There is an urgent need to introduce effective management mechanisms capable of ensuring the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of medical services under the conditions of European integration. In the process of EU integration, the state policy in the medical field requires renewed approaches to its implementation, focusing on improving management efficiency, financial transparency, and service quality. Solving these issues demands strengthening institutional capacity, legal adaptation to European standards and the introduction of mechanisms consistent with the principles of accessibility, equality, and social responsibility» [6]. This policy is a complex mechanism for forming and implementing state-management decisions that cover various spheres of public life, thereby integrating different types of state policy. The complexity also lies in the necessity to harmonize it with the policies of the European Union as a whole and those of its member states.

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2. Literature review

Issues related to the development of state policy for integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been studied by domestic and foreign scholars: Banchuk M., Bedryk I., Bilynska M., Bilous I., Bugaitsov S., Buravlov L., Vasyuk N., Vysotska T., Vovk S., Galatsan O., Hrytsyshen D., Dzhafarova D., Dub N., Dudka V., Zhylka K., Leshchenko V., Karlash V., Klymenko O., Kovalenko T., Korolchuk O., Kotliarevskyi Yu., Kravchenko Zh., Kryzyna N., Krykun O., Krynychko L., Kuzminskyi P., Kurylo T., Lermontova Yu., Liakhovchenko L., Maligon Yu., Martyniuk O., Mokretsov S., Motailo O., Nadiuk Z., Parashchych I., Petryk S., Pitko Ya., Radysh Ya., Rynhach N., Rudyi V., Torbas O., Filts Yu., Ustymchuk O., Firsova O., Furtak I., Shevchuk V., Shehedyn Ya., Shtohryn O., Yurystovska N., Yunger V., Yarosh N., and others.

3. Results and discussions

Despite significant progress in fulfilling EU requirements, many gaps remain, which can be explained by the absence of a comprehensive state policy. This, in turn, results from the following causes:

- political dependence of reform implementation in the spheres of European integration and healthcare, particularly due to lobbying by influential stakeholders;
- lack of coordination and communication between the executive and legislative branches of power, leading to fragmented implementation of state-management decisions;
- high levels of corruption in the healthcare system, which reduce trust from international partners;
- low level of acceptance of reforms by healthcare institutions, medical personnel, the population, and state policy implementers.

Solving this set of problems is possible only through the development of a comprehensive approach to the formation and implementation of the state policy of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space.

The formation and implementation of this policy is a complex and sequential process that can be conditionally divided into the following stages:

1. Identification of symptoms of the problem of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space;
2. Identification of systemic problems in implementing the state policy of integration into the European medical space;
3. Determination of the essential characteristics and areas of distribution of the state policy on integration into the European medical space;
4. Formation of the initial principles of the state policy of integration into the European medical space;
5. Establishment of the main directions of the state policy of integration into the European medical space;
6. Definition of target mechanisms for implementing the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space.

The mentioned stages may be modified, supplemented, or simplified depending on the initial data determined by socio-economic, political and legal, cultural and mental, scientific and technological, natural and climatic factors, and, in the case of Ukraine, also by the factors of war. The characteristics of the mentioned stages are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Methodology of Formation and Implementation of the State Policy on Integration of the National Healthcare System into the European Medical Space

IDENTIFICATION OF SYMPTOMS OF THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE			
1. Low level of quality of medical services	2. Dissatisfaction of the population with the healthcare system	3. Destruction of medical infrastructure due to war	4. Inaccessibility of medical services for certain individuals
5. Insufficient level of drug coverage	6. Low level of response to special conditions	7. Low level of safety for patients and medical personnel	8. Outflow of medical personnel abroad
9. Low level of financing	10. Excessive workload on medical personnel	11. Absence of professional protection of doctors	12. High level of the shadow sector

Continuation of Table 1

Continuation of Table 1

IDENTIFICATION OF SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE POLICY OF INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE		
1. Absence of institutional memory of subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare	2. Political dependence of subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare	3. Insufficient attention to educational and preventive measures regarding public health
4. Outdated mechanisms of financial support of the healthcare system	5 Corruption in the field of state administration of the healthcare system	6. Absence of institutional regulation of the medical services market
7. Absence of a system for studying public health and mechanisms of response and their results	8. Low level of qualification of personnel among subjects implementing state policy in healthcare	9. Influence of oligarchic structures on the reform of the healthcare system
10. Low level of adaptability of subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare	11. Legal collisions in the system of regulation of the healthcare system and the pharmaceutical market	12. Absence of an information-communication system between healthcare institutions
13. Inefficient network of healthcare institutions	14. Demographic problems	15. Low level of safety of the healthcare system
CONTENT CHARACTERISTICS AND AREAS OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE STATE POLICY OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE		
State policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space		European medical space
– this is a process of development, formation, verification, implementation, revision and evaluation of state-administrative decisions, which envisages a set of methods, procedures, measures, tools, and principles applied by subjects of state power to influence the process of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space, which as a result makes it possible to ensure a high level of public health, coordination of interests of stakeholders and effectiveness of implementation of the social function of the state		– his is an international, multi-level system of social relations that defines a set of methods, procedures, principles, measures, tools, legal, financial and organizational support for the provision of medical care in the European Union, forming a set of requirements and taking into account the national peculiarities and legal traditions of each EU member state
INITIAL PROVISIONS OF THE STATE POLICY OF INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE		
Object		Subject
– processes of development of the national healthcare system in overcoming the symptoms of the social problem and systemic problems of this sphere of public administration toward its harmonization with the national healthcare systems of EU member states and compliance with the requirements provided by EU legislation		– the set of legally defined organizational-methodological provisions of the process of formation, verification, implementation, revision and evaluation of state-administrative decisions on the development of the national healthcare system toward its harmonization with the national healthcare systems of EU member states and compliance with the requirements provided by EU legislation
Purpose	– the development, formation, verification, implementation, revision and evaluation of state-administrative decisions concerning the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space on the basis of its harmonization with the national systems of EU member states and compliance with EU legislation	
Tasks:		
- assessment of the potential of the national healthcare system in the context of integration into the European medical space	- assessment of the potential of EU member states for the formation of integration parameters	- development of an action plan for fulfilling the requirements of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space
- development of an action plan for activities of public administration entities concerning the implementation of European integration requirements	- constant revision of the action plan based on screening of the implementation of EU requirements	- assessment of the impact of military actions and other factors on integration processes
- development of a set of measures for the development and harmonization of the human resources potential of the healthcare system in accordance with the requirements of the European Union	- development of the financial and economic foundations for the development and convergence of national healthcare systems within the European Union	- transformation of infrastructural requirements for the healthcare system in accordance with the provisions of European Union legislation

The end of Table 1

DIRECTIONS OF THE STATE POLICY OF INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE		
Human resources potential	Infrastructure	Financial support
TARGET INDICATORS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE POLICY OF INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE EUROPEAN MEDICAL SPACE		
Legal mechanism – transformation of state regulation of the national healthcare system in terms of the development of human resources potential, implementation of new requirements for infrastructure, and reform of the financial support system	Organizational mechanism - transformation of the activities of public administration entities regarding the implementation of tasks related to the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space	Financial mechanism - improvement of the model of healthcare financing, which will ensure its compliance with the requirements of the European Union on the one hand and improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of medical services on the other

The symptoms of the problem of the state policy on integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space are characteristics that describe the systemic crisis of public administration in the healthcare system. In general, the problem of the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space is the inconsistency of the healthcare system with European requirements, which is caused by the crisis of the healthcare system and the inconsistency of state-administrative decisions. The symptoms of this problem are as follows:

- low level of quality of medical services. The quality of medical services is a key element of the transformation and development of the healthcare system in the European Union. An increase in this indicator will make it possible to ensure the development of the medical services market, improve the level of public health and public satisfaction with the healthcare system.

- dissatisfaction of the population with the healthcare system, which may be caused by a combination of socio-economic and cultural-mental factors. Moreover, a significant share of the population resorts to self-treatment and the use of alternative medicine. It should be emphasized that the low level of healthcare funding has led to a low level of implementation of innovative methods of treatment and the provision of medical care;

- destruction of medical infrastructure due to the war;
- inaccessibility of medical services for certain individuals;
- insufficient level of drug coverage;
- outflow of medical personnel abroad;
- low level of response to special conditions;
- low level of safety for patients and medical personnel;
- low level of funding. In Ukraine, expenditures on the healthcare system amount to approximately 2–3 % of GDP, while in EU countries this figure is around 9 %;
- excessive workload on medical personnel;
- absence of professional protection of doctors;
- high level of the shadow sector.

To a large extent, the crisis of the healthcare system and the above-mentioned symptoms of the problem are conditioned by a combination of systemic problems of public administration of the national healthcare system:

- absence of institutional memory among subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare;
- political dependence of subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare;
- insufficient attention to educational and preventive measures concerning public health;
- outdated mechanisms of financial support of the healthcare system;
- corruption in the sphere of public administration of the healthcare system;
- absence of institutional regulation of the medical services market;
- absence of a system for studying public health and mechanisms of response and their results;
- low qualification level of personnel of the subjects implementing state policy in the healthcare field;
- influence of oligarchic structures on the reform of the healthcare system;
- low level of adaptability of the subjects implementing reforms in the field of healthcare;
- legal collisions in the system of regulation of the healthcare system and the pharmaceutical market;
- absence of an information and communication system between healthcare institutions;
- inefficient network of healthcare institutions;
- demographic problems;
- low level of safety of the healthcare system.

The main concepts characterizing the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space are as follows:

- **state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space** – a process of development, formation, verification, implementation, revision, and evaluation of state-administrative decisions that envisage a

set of methods, procedures, measures, tools, and principles applied by state authorities to influence the process of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space, which as a result makes it possible to ensure a high level of public health, coordination of stakeholder interests, and effectiveness of the implementation of the state's social function;

– **European medical space** – an international, multi-level system of social relations that determines a set of methods, procedures, principles, measures, tools, and legal, financial, and organizational provisions for the provision of medical care within the European Union, forming a set of requirements and taking into account the national characteristics and legal traditions of each EU member state.

In the context of the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space, the fundamental provisions of the state policy are being transformed. Thus, taking into account the identified symptoms of the social problem and the systemic problems of public administration, as well as the substantiated substantive characteristics, it is considered that the fundamental provisions of the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space are as follows:

– object-subject field: the object of the state policy – the processes of development of the national healthcare system in overcoming the symptoms of the social problem and systemic problems of this area of public administration toward its harmonization with the national healthcare systems of the EU member states and compliance with the requirements provided by EU legislation; the subject of the state policy – the set of organizational and methodological provisions provided by legislation concerning the process of formation, verification, implementation, revision, and evaluation of state-administrative decisions regarding the development of the national healthcare system toward its harmonization with the healthcare systems of EU member states and compliance with the requirements provided by EU legislation;

– target orientation: the goal of the state policy – development, formation, verification, implementation, revision, and evaluation of state-administrative decisions on the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space on the basis of its harmonization with the national systems of EU member states and compliance with EU legislation; tasks (assessment of the potential of the national healthcare system in the context of integration into the European medical space; assessment of the potential of EU member states for forming integration parameters; development of an action plan to meet the requirements for the integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space; development of an action plan for the activities of public administration entities to implement European integration requirements; continuous review of the action plan based on screening of the implementation of EU requirements; assessment of the impact of military actions and other factors on integration processes; development of a set of measures for the development and harmonization of the human resources potential of the healthcare system in accordance with the requirements of the European Union; development of the financial and economic foundations for the evolution and convergence of national healthcare systems within the European Union; transformation of infrastructural requirements for the healthcare system in accordance with the provisions of European Union legislation).

The main directions of the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space are the development and harmonization of human resources potential, infrastructure, and financial support. Accordingly, the key mechanisms for ensuring harmonization and development of the national healthcare system are: legal mechanism, which envisages the transformation of state regulation of the national healthcare system regarding the development of human resources potential, the introduction of new infrastructure requirements, and the reform of the financial support system; organizational mechanism, in the context of transforming the activities of public administration entities regarding the implementation of tasks of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space; financial mechanism, regarding the improvement of the model of healthcare financing, which will ensure its compliance with the requirements of the European Union on the one hand and improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of medical services on the other.

4. Conclusions and prospects for further research in this area

As a result of the conducted research, a set of organizational and methodological provisions of the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space has been substantiated. The symptoms of the problem of integrating the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been identified, which characterize the current state of the national healthcare system, and their solution is among the key requirements of the European Union. The systemic problems of implementing the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been defined, which constitute obstacles to meeting the requirements of the European Union and, in certain cases, have caused a crisis in the healthcare system in Ukraine. The fundamental provisions of the state policy of integration of the national healthcare system into the European medical space have been formulated. The key objects of the state policy (human resources potential, infrastructure, financial support) and the mechanisms for their management (legal, organizational, financial) have been determined.

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