

## POLICY BRIEF 1 OF 4

# Horizon scanning and workforce futures in the European Union

Horizon scanning for the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting has carried out research into the driving forces influencing the future skills and competences of the health workforce in the European Union out to 2035.

This series of 4 policy briefs and the accompanying main report are aimed at policy makers and workforce planners across Europe to share and better understand the driving forces, the skills implications and to argue for increased use of approaches that can consider multiple workforces and futures as part of health systems and workforce planning.

### Key issues and recommendations at a glance

- ▶ Health care workforces are involved in a wide range of essential activities, such as preventing ill-health, treating and caring for populations. These activities take place within a broader system of health care workforce skills and competences, where the responsibilities to deliver health care is associated with different professional groups.
- ▶ To better understand the future skills and competences required from health workforces, health systems and workforce planning needs to take into account the driving forces causing change and to understand their potential effects across individual and multiple health workforces.

### We recommend that:

1. **Member States, competent national authorities and partners are aware of the implications of these driving forces on the workforce** (including the skills implications). **We encourage that this information and knowledge is applied** in Member States' national-specific contexts with the support of workforce planning expertise and knowledge as mapped within the EU Joint Action expert network.
2. **Member States investigate the development of qualitative and quantitative workforce planning methods as well as multi-professional projections** (within the context of individual member states) to further develop our future understanding of the implications to the workforce and skills.
3. **the EU Commission and Member States consider the requirement, scope and timeframe of a further workforce research programme which builds on this horizon scanning.** The next stage would be to simulate the effects of selected driving forces on workforce skills and competences as part of a system dynamics modelling project at EU level where a range of challenging futures would be generated and quantified.
4. **the EU Commission and Member States are aware of the need to ensure that this programme of work should consider and investigate the health and care workforces of the EU.** Our health and care systems are intertwined; as are our health and care pathways that patients and service users travel. Therefore a wider scoping of the issues potentially impacting on these workforces, with full engagement with the Commission, Member States, social partners, patient representatives and carers, is necessary to consider how our health and care systems need to respond to the future pressures and future challenges they face and how we may further share approaches to respond to these challenges.



### A complex system

The full accompanying report has visualised and described a complex system surrounding health workforce skills and competences. This level of detail is simplified in these briefings to provide an overview of the driving forces, and their implications for workforce skills, at the levels of populations, health care services and health workforces.

### Applicability of the approach

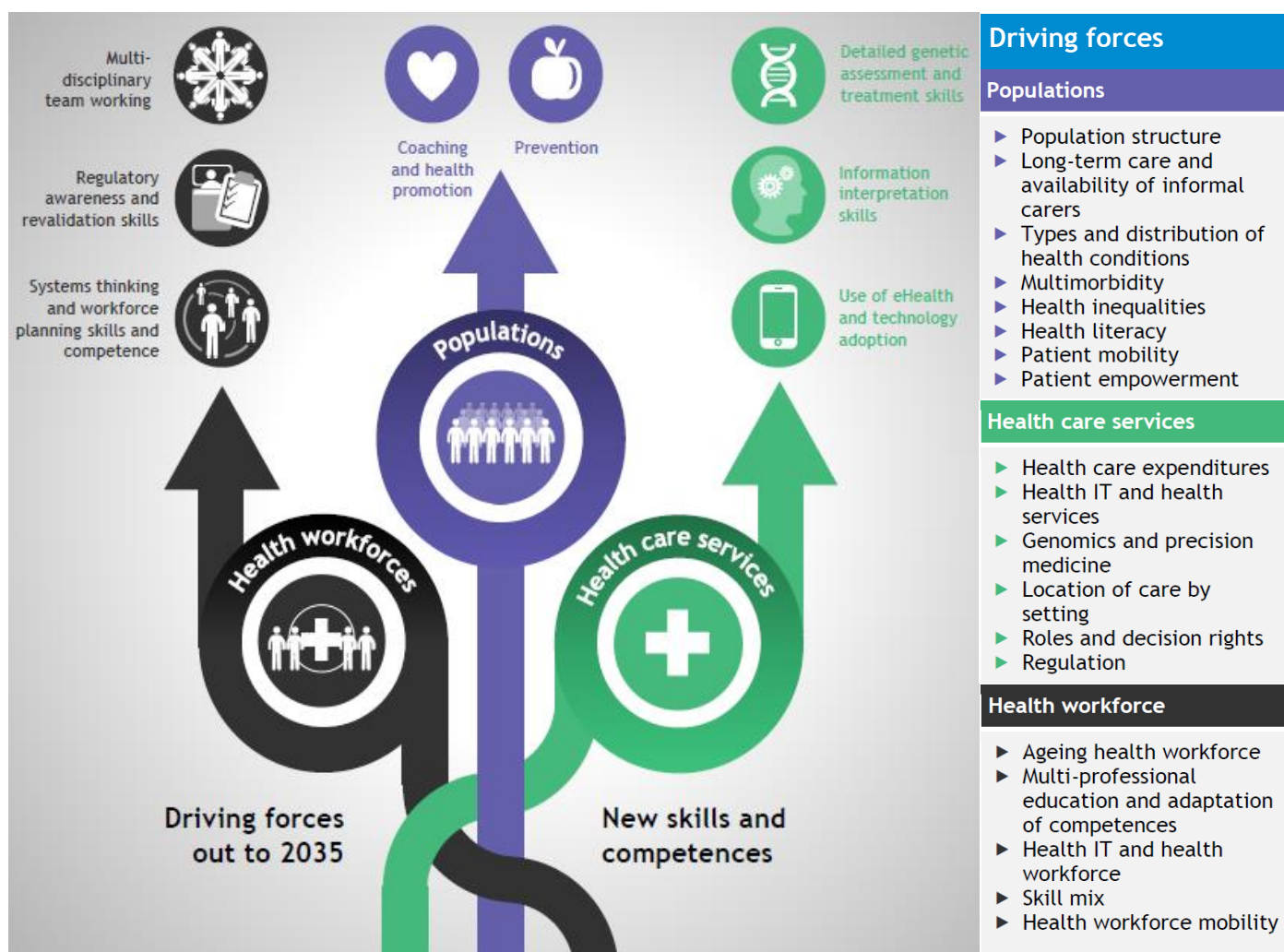
The approach described in the report can be directly applied within national-specific contexts to better understand current workforce systems and the forces and factors driving change within them, which are likely to vary across Member States and have divergent effects in different health systems.

### Skills and competences

Importantly, the report considers the system from a skills and competences perspective. This allows multiple health workforces to be considered and the focus to be on what will need to be done in the future, rather than starting from the existing division of roles and responsibilities and attempting to work these forward.

### Drivers and skills implications

The high-level drivers of change at the different levels are shown below. The other briefings in this series describe the drivers of change acting on populations, health care services and health workforces and the resultant future skills implications.



Full report available at [www.healthworkforce.eu](http://www.healthworkforce.eu)



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