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Strengthening competitive forces in Russian mandatory health insurance

Hans Wiesmeth

Technische Universität Dresden,
Faculty of Business and Economics,
01062 Dresden, Germany
and
Ural Federal University,
19 Mira Street, Yekaterinburg, Russia
Email: hans.wiesmeth@tu-dresden.de

Abstract: The Russian healthcare system has experienced significant reforms since the early 1990s. The traditional Semashko system of the Soviet Union was replaced by a more decentralised and insurance-based system, which in turn was augmented and modified several times with the goal to strengthen competitive forces for better quality of healthcare, to open equal access to quality medical care, in particular. Nevertheless, despite these serious attempts, the actual situation is still far from this goal. A serious lack of financial means, and framework conditions, which are not in favour of strong competitive forces, have to be blamed in the first place. In this context, a rigorous formal analysis is applied to provide insight into the competitive forces in Russian mandatory health insurance. The paper investigates first the current system. Thereafter, a modified system with more possibilities of competition will be proposed. Besides an increase in funding, this modified system requires structural changes in comparison to the current system. The results obtained refer to existence of equilibria and their structural, efficiency and fairness properties, which are of relevance for the further development of the Russian healthcare system.

Keywords: health system Russia; health insurance; competition; mandatory membership; locational equilibrium; healthcare quality; incentive mechanism.

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Biographical notes: Hans Wiesmeth received his Diploma in Mathematics from University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in 1975, Dr. rer. pol. from University of Hamburg in 1979 and Habilitation from University of Hamburg in 1980. In 1981 to 1992, he is a Professor of Economics at University of Bonn. In 1992 to 2015, he is a Professor of Economics at TU Dresden, since then Professor em. In 2005 to 2010, he is the Dean of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management and from 2014 he is the Academic Director of the Laboratory of International and Regional Economics at the Graduate School of Economics and Management, Ural Federal University. He is the President of the Saxon Academy of Sciences at Leipzig in 2016.

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