

Unofficial Translation

First National Health Assembly
Agenda 3.14

Resolution 1.14 13 December 2008

Economic Crisis and Health Protection for Thai People

The First National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Economic Crisis and Health Protection for Thai People,

Anxious about the current economic and monetary crises likely to affect Thai economy and the State expenditure budget, including expenditure budget for health, as well as the effect on the health of the general public, especially low-income groups or the poor,

Taking note of various measures undertaken to mitigate the health effects during the 2007 economic crisis, such as controlling health expenditure, improving the medical supplies system under the policy “Good Health at Low Costs”, bulk purchase of drugs, rational use of drugs, and health decentralization,

Concerned about possible psychological impacts that may lead to inflicting harms on self and family, including health impacts on the unemployed persons or laid-off workers, especially those suffering from chronic diseases who need medication on a regular basis and those with such infections as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, who need medication on a regular basis, but can no longer use the service at the clinics under contract with the Office of Social Security at which they are registered,

Anxious about the likelihood that health care costs under the universal coverage system will increase to cover an unemployed and laid-off population likely to reach a two million mark and that the prices of drugs for chronic diseases will increase as a result of a changed rate of exchange,

Taking note of various health risk behaviours that are related to and compound the poverty problems at individual, family and social levels, such as consumption of tobacco and alcohol,

Aware that the existing health information system lacks the linkage of networking between information producers and users in every sector and cannot be used for the purposes of surveillance, analysis and synthesis as a basis for right and timely decision making for present and future health-threatening situations,

Hereby passes the following resolutions:

1. The government is called upon to implement social protection measures, to provide in particular increased budgetary support sufficient for the management of the universal health coverage, prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, provision of anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS, support for renal replacement

therapy, provision of measures to prevent and cushion impacts on poor elderly people and people with disabilities, including psychological remedy for unemployed people, laid-off workers and those affected by the economic crisis.

2. Agencies concerned, especially the Ministry of Public Health, Health Systems Research Institute, Thai Health Promotion Foundation, National Health Security Office, and Office of Social Security, are urged to take the following actions together:

- 2.1 Work together actively to implement social protection measures in health promotion for people at the time of the economic crisis mentioned in 1 above;
- 2.2 Update and develop the health information system to be accurate, timely and comprehensive for use in surveillance, including early warning before an undesirable incident occurs; and synthesize lessons and experiences learnt during the current economic crisis in every aspect in a comprehensive and systematic manner as a basis for developing strategies or measures for similar incidents that may occur in the future from various causes;
- 2.3 Develop effective public health service systems, especially the primary care system, and mobilize resources from various sources, especially local government organizations, to support the development of such health service systems;
- 2.4 Develop effective policy and measures for the management of risk behaviours that have an effect on poverty problems, such as consumption of alcohol and tobacco;
- 2.5 Set short- and long-term measures for the prevention and handling of such impacts in an appropriate and timely manner, improving the processes that involve the working together of the National Health Security Office and Office of Social Security as follows:
 - 1) On the change of clinics under the Office of Social Security: It shall be possible to change a clinic under the Office of Social Security at the public health service centre where the unemployed person seeks service;
 - 2) On registration as a person entitled to health security: It shall be possible for an unemployed person to continue to use his/her social security right for eight months and upon the end of the eighth month to immediately receive the health security right, allowing to use the same principle as when the right was first exercised;
 - 3) Consultations shall be speedily organized to reach a joint decision on the implementation and revision of rules and regulations within January 2009 focusing on the benefits to the public;
 - 4) Information shall be publicized via public media, business establishments, health service centres and call centres of every agency so that the public understand how to get proper health service.

5) The Ministry of Public Health (through the Health Systems Research Institute), Ministry of Labour (through the Office of Social Security), and the National Health Security Office shall work together to synthesize the body of knowledge and lessons learnt from the 2007 economic crisis so as to be better prepared for the impacts of the current economic crisis.

3. The Secretary-General of the National Health Commission is called upon to consider taking the following actions:

3.1 Promote the establishment of “Units for surveillance and monitoring of the impacts of the economic crisis on Thai health” through the cooperation between the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labour (through the Office of Social Security), and Health Systems Research Institute (HSRI), charged with the following duties:

1) Monitoring the impacts of the economic crisis on the health of Thai people in all aspects, using the existing information or collecting additional information as necessary.

2) Reporting the monitoring of such surveillance to the agencies concerned on a periodical basis;

3.2 Report the implementation of this resolution to the Second National Health Assembly in 2009.
