

More Debate, Less Shouting

Moving forward in the Irish Health System

Who are we?

- A bunch of Irish academics, and NGOs working in Ireland and abroad, with a common interest in our health care system.
- We have different views about the proposal on UHI, with some broadly in favour, and some not.
- None of us, as far as I know, thinks the current system can provide fair, accessible, affordable, reasonable quality health care.
- PublicPolicy.ie, an independent think tank, are supporting our work.

What are we doing?

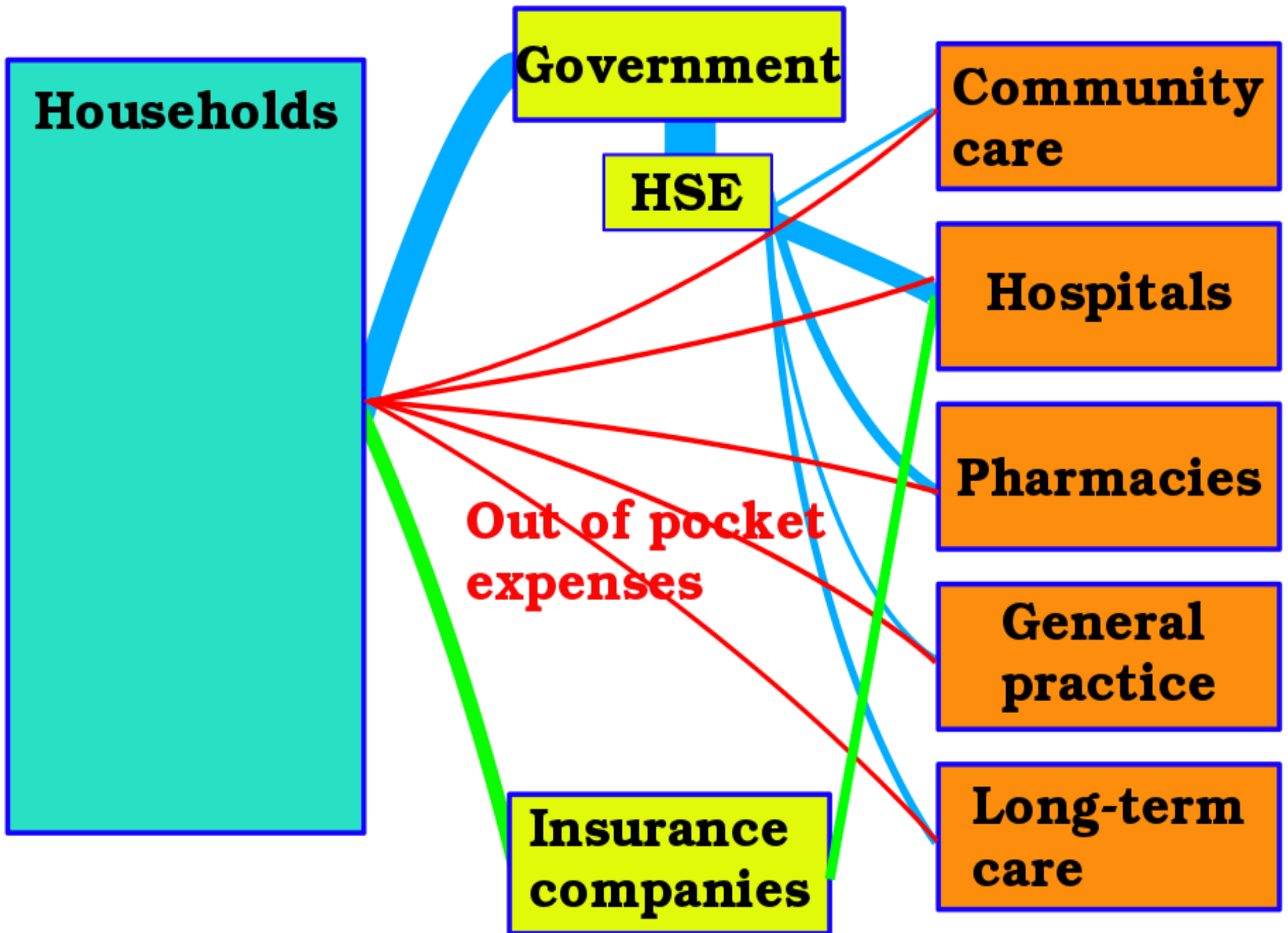
- Promoting a public debate on the content of a new Irish Health System
- Exploring issues, options and implications
- Not making recommendations
- Supporting a series of technical meetings

And today?

- The first of a series of public debates, where we seek to get your answers to some key questions
- You are our guinea pigs!
- You get to do the work here

Basic questions

- Who pays?
- What is provided?
- Who decides?



Who pays

- Ultimately, you do.
- Whether the system is tax funded, insurance based, or paid privately, the money to pay for healthcare comes from households.
- Key issues are equity, fairness, and efficiency.

What's wrong with the present system?

- It's expensive, it's not very efficient, and it is quite unfair.
- There are too many 'perverse incentives' – where we pay people to do stupid stuff.

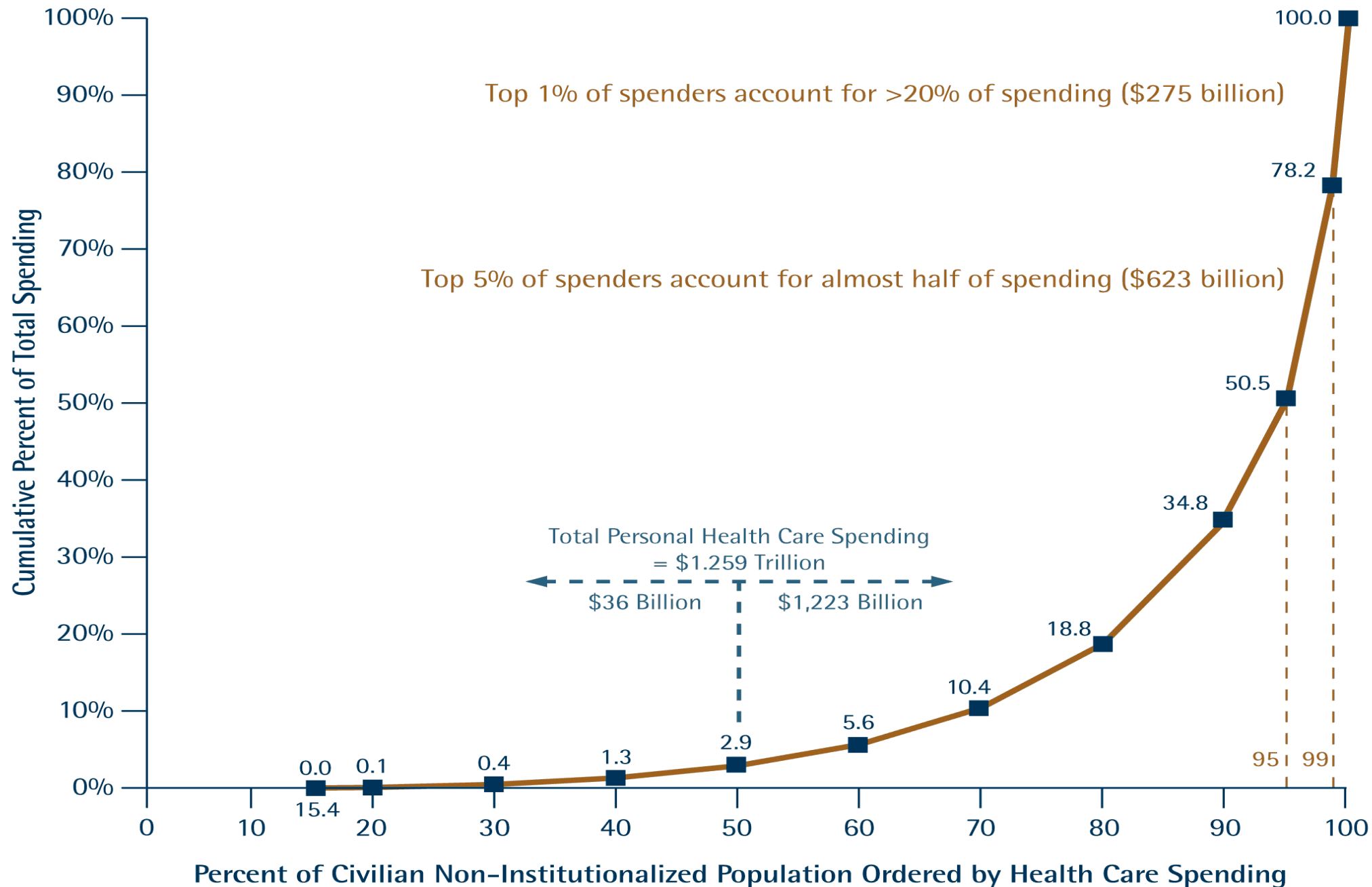
Perverse incentives

- For most people, primary care costs money, and most hospital services are free
- Primary care is cheaper, and more effective for chronic diseases
- Most of the patients, and most of the investment, goes to the hospitals.
- This is just silly.

Challenges

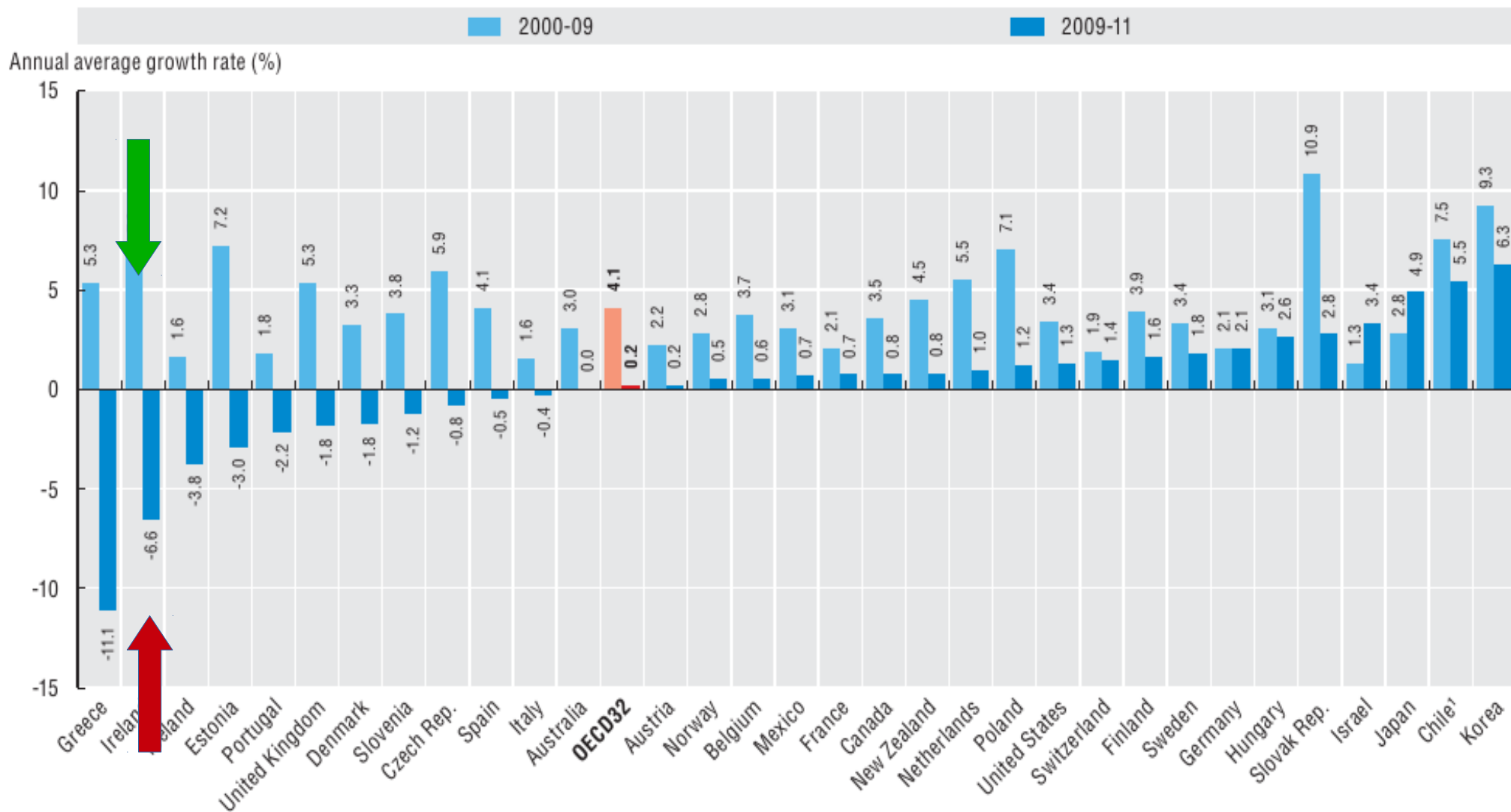
- Over the next decade, the proportion and the number of older people in Ireland will both rise
- This leads to an increased number of people with various chronic diseases
- Not the end of the world, but something to be dealt with

FIGURE 1. CUMULATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL HEALTH CARE SPENDING, 2009



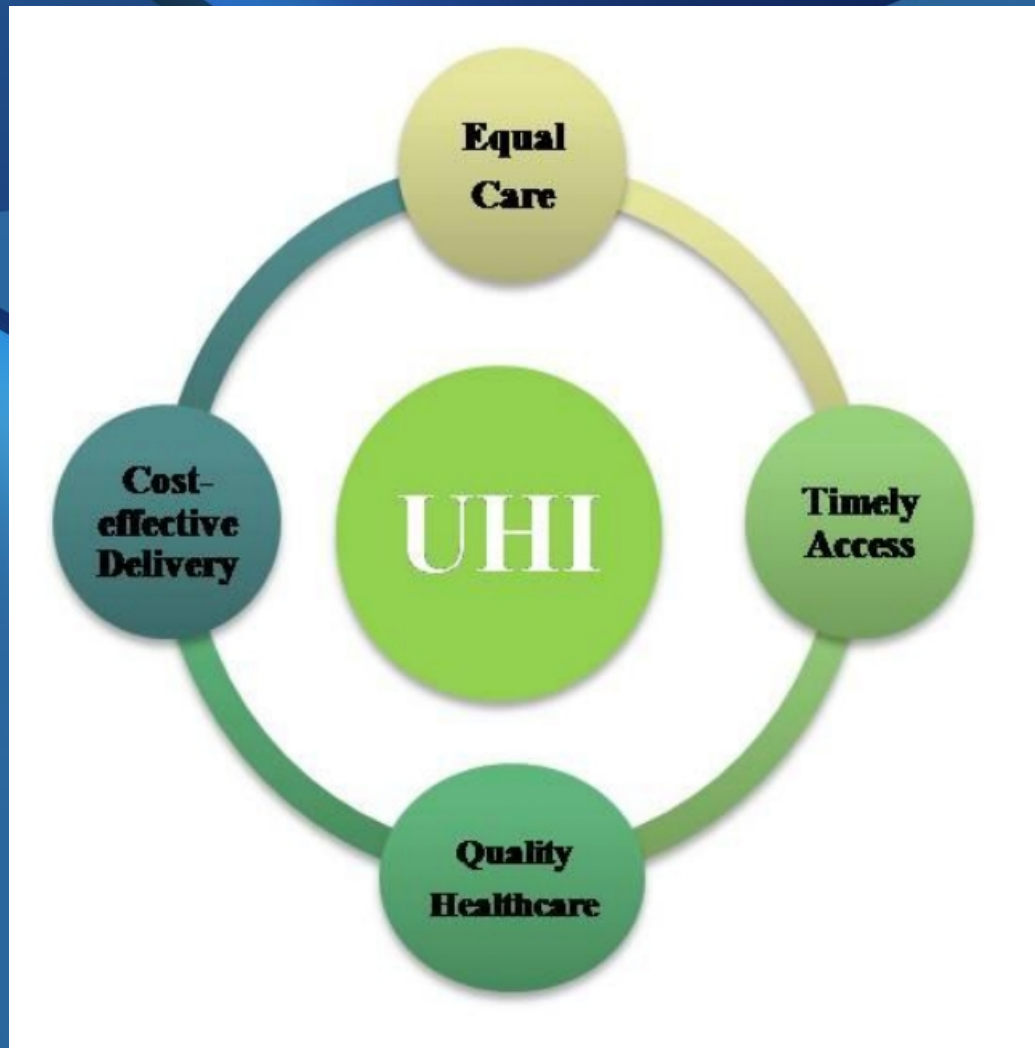
Changes in health care expenditure

7.1.2. Annual average growth rate in per capita health expenditure, real terms, 2000 to 2011 (or nearest year)



1. CPI used as deflator

The logo



The questions

- How important to you is a single tier service?
- What should be covered?
- How should drugs be paid for?
- Who decides about services?
- What about moving care, and money, to primary care?

Single tier service

- How important to you is a single tier service?
 - This means that everyone is in the same queue for treatments and investigations.
- What do you like about this idea, what do you dislike?
 - People who currently pay for private insurance (a bit under half of us) will get free access to GP care, but lose their faster access to hospitals and specialists.
- What do you feel about this?

The coverage

- The intent is that the basic basket of services will cover a full range of health care services. The wider the coverage the more it will cost. This cost will come either in taxation, or payments for insurance.
- What ought to be covered?
- Is the current proposal roughly right, too broad, or too narrow?

Drugs

- For drugs, is the current scheme more or less fair?
- This is the combination of free drugs, but with a prescription fee per item, for people on lower incomes and a monthly cap on drug costs for a family (currently €140).

New services

- Who ought to make decisions on the provision of new treatments in this system?
- At the moment it is the Minister and the Department who have the final say, although many hospitals and practices also bring in new treatments as these emerge.
- Is this the right way to do it, or should we have some independent process, for example an expert panel, like that used in the UK?

Primary care vs. Hospital care

- Far more services will be provided in the community, in pharmacies, and in general practice in the future.
- There will be a much stronger emphasis on showing people how to look after their own health and manage their own illness, with their doctor or nurse.
- What do you feel about this?
- Do you approve?
- Can you see any problems?