



Through the looking glass

**A practical path to improving
healthcare through transparency**

**Country report card:
Switzerland**

KPMG International

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Foreword

Transparency in healthcare is vitally important, but to-date has failed to live up to its promise of transforming quality and cost. Too often progress has been symbolic, and has given rise to bitter disputes between political ideologues and resistant provider groups. Even countries that have led the field are now facing difficult questions about what value is really created for all their effort.

With a score of just 53 percent, Switzerland has only attained a mid-table ranking in our global index of health system transparency — in the same range as neighbors Germany and Italy. This study, which involves 32 countries, measures the transparency of healthcare systems across six key dimensions, looking at a total of 27 indicators.

The single biggest weakness for Switzerland is the availability of data on ‘Quality of Healthcare,’ which achieved a transparency score of only 33 percent. Information about mortality/survival rates or hospital re-admissions rates are rarely published — even though many hospitals collect such data. Indeed, some healthcare providers even go so far as to try to prevent publication of such data. Another low-scoring area of transparency is related to the ‘Communication of Healthcare Data (36 percent),’ partly because such information has to be gathered from different sources, making it difficult to compare healthcare providers. Significant improvements could be achieved by making healthcare data freely accessible via a dedicated website that is kept up-to-date and is easy to locate and navigate.

Despite having a health system that is widely acknowledged as high-performing, Switzerland could further improve overall transparency by following the lead of the index’s top ranking countries: Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The government of Denmark is a great example of how to successfully create a positive policy and legislative environment, supported by a governance model that focuses on quality of care and quality management.

The following pages examine the study — and Switzerland’s performance — in greater detail, while the full report offers deeper insight into the pressing issue of transparency. This study seeks to establish how health systems can fulfil the potential of transparency as a powerful, positive change agent. We present in-depth and revealing research into the state of play of global health system transparency; explore what makes a health system transparent; examine the benefits, risks and opportunities of transparency; and delve into what the optimum future for transparency could look like and how health systems can achieve this goal.



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To read about these lessons and case studies in more detail, please see full report — *Through the looking glass: A practical path to improving healthcare through transparency*

What is a transparent health system?

Transparency of health systems matters, but progress to date has been more symbolic than substantive. KPMG International's recent report 'Through the Looking Glass' showed the wide variation that exists in how far different countries have pursued transparency in healthcare, with the central message that every system needs to improve how strategically it uses this powerful but potentially damaging tool.

What constitutes 'transparency' in healthcare is hotly contested around the world, but following a global literature search and interviews with experts around the world, the following six dimensions surfaced as the most important:

1. **Quality of healthcare:** transparency of provider-level performance measures, especially the quality of outcomes and processes.
2. **Patient experience:** patient perceptions of their healthcare experience and outcomes.
3. **Finance:** price and payments transparency, and the public nature of accounts for healthcare organizations.
4. **Governance:** open decision making, rights and responsibilities, resource allocation, assurance processes and accountability mechanisms.
5. **Personal healthcare data:** access, ownership, and safeguarding of patient's individual health data.
6. **Communication of healthcare data:** the extent to which all the above is presented in an accessible, reliable and useful way to all relevant stakeholders.

Using these six dimensions we constructed a scorecard to measure each of the world's major health systems. Twenty-seven indicators were measured for each country tracking the extent to which different transparency practices were in effect on a systemic level. Selection of the indicators was on the basis of published evidence and interviews with experts, under the guidance of a twelve-member global health system transparency steering group. We considered indicators that were: employed by other organizations to measure transparency; likely to highlight meaningful variation across health systems; used by stakeholders to effect positive change; and, identified as important by interviewees.

Completed transparency scorecards were received from 32 countries, covering most OECD and G20 countries. A composite overall ranking score was created by summing each country's score for every indicator.

Methodology

This study involved several research stages:

- Summary literature review of the evidence on health systems transparency
- 25 interviews with experts
- Development of the transparency framework and sense-testing with KPMG heads of health and interviewees
- Completion of the transparency scorecard by leaders of KPMG's major health practices
- Transparency scorecard data collected and analyzed by country

Data health warning

- It is not necessarily good to have a high score because transparency can be harmful as well as beneficial
- The data shows what health systems are currently doing, not whether the transparency is well managed, or achieving good or ill

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A health system that provides accessible, reliable, useful and up-to-date information to all interested stakeholders so they can acquire meaningful understanding of the quality, patient experience, finance, governance, and individual health data associated with the health system, and make judgements on its fairness. ”

KPMG International definition of healthcare transparency, Through the Looking Glass (2017)

Global health systems transparency index – composite results (%)

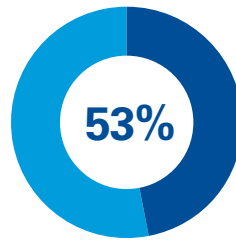
	Overall Score	1. Quality of Healthcare	2. Patient Experience	3. Finance	4. Governance	5. Personal Healthcare Data	6. Communication of Healthcare Data
Denmark	74	67	62	83	94	93	50
Finland	72	48	46	83	88	86	93
Sweden	71	81	69	75	69	79	50
Norway	69	67	62	83	81	71	50
UK	69	57	85	83	81	57	57
Australia	68	52	62	83	88	64	64
New Zealand	67	38	54	83	94	64	79
Netherlands	67	57	85	75	69	50	71
Portugal	64	48	46	83	63	86	71
Singapore	63	57	77	83	81	43	43
Israel	62	48	92	50	56	79	57
Brazil	61	48	69	67	81	64	43
Canada	61	57	46	50	81	50	79
Spain	61	76	46	42	75	71	43
France	60	48	62	67	75	50	64
Germany	56	29	54	75	63	64	64
Italy	54	57	31	67	56	64	50
Iceland	53	43	54	75	63	50	43
Switzerland	53	33	69	67	69	57	36
R. of Korea	52	29	31	83	56	50	79
Poland	50	29	46	67	56	57	57
R. of Ireland	49	29	31	67	75	79	43
Luxembourg	47	29	46	50	63	50	50
Russia	47	33	38	67	63	50	36
Austria	46	29	31	58	56	64	43
Japan	46	48	31	67	56	43	29
Greece	43	29	38	50	69	50	29
Mexico	42	33	46	42	50	36	50
K. Saudi Arabia	38	29	31	50	50	43	29
South Africa	37	33	31	33	44	50	29
India	36	29	31	42	44	43	29
China	32	29	31	50	31	29	29
Average Score	55	44	51	66	67	59	52

■ 70% and over
 ■ 60% and over
 ■ 50% and over
 ■ 40% and over
 ■ Lower than 40%

In depth reflections on Switzerland's results






Overall transparency score =



- Switzerland's overall score of 53 percent places it in the third or middle tier of countries on the transparency index.
- There is a wide variation in how Switzerland scores across the six different dimensions of transparency measured. Relatively high scores were recorded for transparency of 'Governance' (69 percent), 'Patient Experience' (69 percent), and 'Finance' (67 percent). Lower scores were achieved for transparency of 'Personal Healthcare Data' (57 percent) and particularly, 'Quality of Healthcare Data' (33 percent) and 'Communication of Healthcare Data' (36 percent).
- The comparatively strong performance on transparency of '**Governance**' is partly a result of Switzerland's Freedom of Information Act, which outlines patient rights — including what individual patients are entitled to and can expect from healthcare providers. The country also makes information available about health service procurement processes. However, further advances could be made through more public decision-making, including patient/public involvement.
- '**Patient Experience**' is another higher-scoring dimension, with all Swiss healthcare providers obliged to publicly report patient satisfaction and approval ratings. Switzerland also has a clear patient complaints system for most (but not all) providers, detailing who patients can make a complaint to and how their complaints will be handled. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement, with a need to measure and publish patient-reported outcomes.
- With respect to the transparency of '**Finance**', it is encouraging to note that there is public reporting by all healthcare providers of prices charged to patients and health insurers/payers, for individual medical conditions and treatments. To gain higher a transparency score, however, all healthcare providers should publish annual reports with independently audited financial accounts (information that is available but currently not made public). The public disclosure of all payments, gifts and hospitality made to healthcare staff would also enhance transparency.
- Another positive relates to the transparency of '**Personal Healthcare Data**', where Switzerland has a published patient data privacy and safeguarding policy — although this is not a legal obligation. Patients are also informed about third party use of their individual health data. Despite these favorable conditions, transparency could be advanced by giving all patients access to their up-to-date electronic medical records, and by sharing clinical documentation through a patient portal where patients could contribute to or edit their personal health data. To this end, the Federal Electronic Patient Records Act (EPDG), expected to be introduced in 2017, is welcomed. This law will initiate the introduction of an electronic patient records system, giving patients anytime access to their personal health data, the means to upload or add any information and to share access with others.
- There is considerable room for improvement on the transparency of '**Quality of Healthcare**'. Although all hospital providers collect data on re-admission rates, adverse events, and hospital-acquired infections, this information is not yet publicly reported.
- Finally, transparency around the '**Communication of Healthcare Data**' could improve by making healthcare data freely accessible via a dedicated website that is up-to-date and easy to locate and navigate. Publishing this data in open and machine readable formats, and under open licence would be a further step forward, allowing independent data processing and analysis.

Global Health Systems Transparency Framework Results Switzerland

 <p>Dimension 1 Quality of Healthcare</p> <p>Total result: 33%</p>	Indicator	1.1. Mortality/survival rates for individual medical conditions & treatments	1.2. All- cause mortality/survival rates	1.3. Hospital re-admission rates	1.4. Waiting times for emergency care	1.5. 'Adverse event' reporting	1.6. Hospital-acquired infections
		(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 4)
	Score	1	3	1	1	1	1
 <p>Dimension 2 Patient Experience</p> <p>Total result: 69%</p>	Indicator	2.1. Patient reported outcome measures	2.2. Patient satisfaction	2.3. Patient approval	2.4. Patient complaints		
		(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)		
	Score	1	3	3	2		
 <p>Dimension 3 Finance</p> <p>Total result: 67%</p>	Indicator	3.1. Financial performance	3.2. Prices patients are charged	3.3. Prices health insurers/payers are charged	3.4. Disclosure of payments, gifts and hospitality to healthcare staff		
		(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)		
	Score	1	3	3	1		

 <p>Dimension 4 Governance</p> <p>Total result: 69%</p>	Indicator	4.1. Freedom of Information legislation	4.2. Patient rights	4.3. Procurement processes and decision-making	4.4. Public decision making	4.5. Patient/Public involvement
		(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 3)
	Score	3	3	3	1	1
 <p>Dimension 5 Personal Healthcare Data</p> <p>Total result: 57%</p>	Indicator	5.1. Electronic patient records system	5.2. Shared clinical documentation	5.3. Patient data privacy and safeguarding policy	5.4. Information on use of patient data	
		(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 3)	
	Score	1	1	3	3	
 <p>Dimension 6 Communication of Healthcare Data</p> <p>Total result: 36%</p>	Indicator	6.1. Accessible data	6.2. Up-to-date data	6.3. Direct comparison of providers and services	6.4. Open data formats	
		(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)	(total possible score = 3)	(total possible score = 4)	
	Score	1	1	2	1	

Seven features of successful healthcare transparency

There is critical need for transparency to be better managed if it is to deliver its future potential. The research conducted for this report identifies seven different features that all health systems need to consider more seriously if the gains of transparency are to be unlocked, and risks avoided:

1

A consistent strategy. The government of Denmark offers a good example, having successfully created a positive policy and legislative environment, supported by a governance model that focuses on quality of care and quality management.

2

Take the lead from innovative providers. The most enlightened stakeholders be they providers, purchasers or payers are not waiting to have transparency imposed on them by legislation, but are looking to how they can best introduce and manage transparency initiatives to improve quality and value. Taking the lead from them can avoid a top-down approach which can generate resistance.

3

Measuring what matters to patients. Information on patient experience is a key motivator in attracting more consumers to use performance data in healthcare decisions. The Friends and Family Test introduced by the English NHS provides real-time information on patient experience based on a single question asking whether people would recommend the health service they have recently used to friends and family.

4

Fewer measures, more meaningful data. One of the most immediate benefits of transparency is that people can see what information is currently collected across the system. This can stimulate useful debates about how much of this is really necessary, and which indicators are most helpful to improving care.

5

Providing personalized price transparency. In line with evidence on what consumers seek from price data to support choice, personalized price transparency tools provide information on actual costs for individual patients.

6

A give-and-take approach to safeguarding patient data. Transparent data security and information governance has become a necessity. In developing a privacy and safeguarding strategy for personal patient data, it is vital that there is a clear 'what's in it for me' argument for patients, in addition to any more abstract benefits to the system.

7

Promote independent narratives to improve understanding. Independent data assessment and interpretation enables better understanding of the impact and outcomes of healthcare policies, performance, and markets. Dr. Foster in the UK was an early pioneer of independent third party narratives. The Health Care Incentives Improvement Institute (HCI³) in the US, using advanced analytic techniques, provides such narratives currently.

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Publication name: Through the looking glass: A practical path to improving healthcare through transparency — Switzerland

Publication number: 134300g-G

Publication date: March 2017