

Jolanta Demidowicz

The role of the poviats authorities in the implementation of the National Health Program 2007-2015 on the example of prevention and health promotion

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is:

- to analyze the activity of poviats with regard to the implementation of health programs;
- to verify whether health programs implemented by the poviats under the National Health Program 2007-2015 were in line with the objectives of the Program.

Theoretical part of the paper focuses on the development of local self-governments in Poland, with particular emphasis on their role in health care. Then the origins of the National Health Programs in Poland are presented and the evolution of the programs is shown. It has been reported that successive editions of the Programs were better suited to the health needs of the society, and the proposed measures corresponded to the advancement of knowledge and technology in health care. An in-depth analysis of the objectives of the National Health Program 2007-2015 has been performed and specific measures aimed at achieving the Program objectives have been reviewed. It has been proved that the role of the media was not sufficiently taken into account while implementing the Program.

Sources of data are a questionnaire survey covering 84% of poviats in Poland and data of the Ministry of Health obtained from the reports on the implementation of health programs, submitted by the poviats.

Activity of the poviats in the field of health promotion and prevention was assessed using information on the following aspects: presence of health issues in the poviat development strategies, discussions on health promotion and prevention at poviat council sessions, sources of financing for health promotion and prevention activities, cooperation with other institutions, employment of public health specialists to fulfill certain tasks, assessment of the possibility of implementing tasks in the field of health promotion and prevention and the sources of difficulties in the completion of the tasks.

Data analysis shows that only 20% to 25% of poviats undertook activities that can be considered beneficial for the implementation of health promotion and prevention. This applies to all the particular issues mentioned above. Significant differences between voivodships have been observed, which was unfavorable for the implementation of the main goal of the NHP, that is reducing inequalities in health. The nominal goals of the programs implemented by the poviats were consistent with the goals of the NHP, but the hierarchy of these goals did not fully correspond to that of the NHP. Many analyzes have indicated a significant role of the State Sanitary Inspection in supporting the poviats in performing the discussed activities.

The results of the report data analysis shows significant differences between particular years and voivodeships, with regard to the activity of poviats in the field of health programs. The results based on these data indicate potentially low impact of the program interventions on the health of the population, as considered from the perspective of public health. This impact can be characterized by a small percentage of the population being covered by the program and very low costs, amounting to the maximum amount of less than PLN 2 per capita in the year 2009.

Data on the goals of the implemented programs were generally consistent with the data obtained in the survey.

It has been shown that the obtained results largely correspond to later analyzes, i.e. to the results of the Supreme Audit Office of 2016 and the results of an extensive study on the determinants of the activity of self-governments in the field of health programs, presented in the monograph by A. Augustynowicz.

The analyzes has resulted in cognitive and practical conclusions, which are presented below.

Cognitive conclusions.

1. The National Health Program 2007-2015 does not encourage sufficient use of the social media.
2. The data show that about 20-25 percent of the poviats in Poland properly perceive health prevention and promotion, and that they are successful at implementing tasks in this area.
3. Although activity of the poviats in the field of health prevention and promotion is consistent with the scope of the National Health Program 2007-2015, a credible assessment of its compliance is not possible, based on the available materials,

4. The differences between voivodeships in terms of their approach to health prevention and promotion is an unfavorable phenomenon, considering the main objective of the National Health Program 2007-2015, which is reduction of inequalities in health.
5. Thematic scope of the planned and implemented health programs corresponds with the objectives of the National Health Program 2007-2015; however, the percentage distribution is not fully consistent with the hierarchy of objectives specified in the NHP.
6. The results indicate a significant role of the State Sanitary Inspection in the health promotion and prevention activities in poviats, and - in particular - in the organization of health programs by local governments.
7. The data on the number of programs, the number of people covered by the program interventions and the program costs show that the potential impact of health program interventions on public health is negligible or that it cannot be measured.
8. The current status of the implementation of health programs does not contribute to reducing inequalities in health, and it may even make them permanent.

Practical conclusions from the perspective of public health.

1. It is advisable to use social media more in order to achieve health policy goals.
2. It is advisable to develop and implement mechanisms that ensure compliance of the health program goals implemented by local governments (currently health policy programs) with the current state health policy goals, and keep the principles of local governance at the same time.
3. It is advisable to develop and implement mechanisms to counteract possible, adverse effects of the implementation of health programs by local governments on reducing inequalities in health.