



Closing

*Agnès Buzyn, French Minister of Health and Solidarities
Conversation with Guy Vallancien*

1. Prevention: a profitable tool for future generations

The health system must encourage prevention. To do so it must take a long-term approach, as prevention does not produce immediate returns. It can take decades to see its results. We French, individually and collectively, have to modify our behaviours. It was 40 years ago that this concept was first expressed, but little is changing. Mandatory vaccination and higher tobacco prices are symbols that should lead every person to think concretely about how their habits impact their health and longevity. The health system, designed in the 1950s when acute diseases dominated health concerns, remains focused on care and not on prevention. Prevention must be included in health pathways from the earliest possible age, and requires specific incentives. Health professionals must be financially incentivised to encourage prevention.

2. The physician's role in prevention

By nature, doctors are prescribers and not preventers. As such, their patients listen to them, more so than the rest of the health system. Doctors therefore cannot get off the hook, and have to strive for prevention. Over the five-year term, 8 to 9 out of every 10 children will be up to date with their mandatory vaccinations. Medical students must gradually incorporate this prevention aspect into their learning and internships.

3. The necessary digital transformation and best use of health data

Health data will constitute a major tool in the emergence of a prevention policy, in the key interests of patients and sufferers.

4. From process to health pathway

The health system must strive for a coherent whole. It is currently scattered and lacks overall consistency. Each operator is focused on their own activity. A practitioner is not remunerated if they think that the patient does not need an operation. The care system is not organised in a way that is conducive to a coordinated health pathway. It needs in-depth transformation. Such transformation will not come from the Ministry, but from the players

in the system, patients included, working together to jointly build a better one. The State will have to present the strategy and not seek to impose solutions. That will come from the players.

5. Regulatory exemptions and financial incentives

Statistical data does not provide an accurate picture of access to care and medical resources. A given region may have many doctors, but they may be overworked and thus inaccessible. The expression "medical desert" is therefore inappropriate. It cannot simply be repopulated. A proper response to public health demands requires the development of regulatory exemptions and financial incentives, to permit regions to offer innovative organisational structures and expand time for medical care. Delegation of tasks is often invoked as a way of giving doctors more time. But on a day when they have to see 40 patients, a doctor may want to treat simple problems so as not to run out of breath. To incentivise doctors to concentrate on complex consultations, they must be remunerated accordingly.

6. From crisis management to managing the unexpected

Crisis management is a complex issue, as a crisis management system is often guided by past crises. But every crisis is different, which means continuously rethinking the oversight system. Crisis management is increasingly becoming a system for managing the unexpected. This concept – managing the unexpected – should play a more central role in how the health system is organised.

7. Creation of an intermediate stage between clinical research and care

A real-time tracker should be put in place, to simplify the initiatives undertaken by the industry, and to rapidly assess the benefit to patients of the products being developed. Although development should be facilitated, oversight and safety levels must be maintained. More broadly, if innovative initiatives are to be facilitated, France must develop a strategic vision for research and cannot limit itself to supporting bottom-up approaches.

The President of the Republic and the Government want to transform the country. This transformation effort requires regular, transversal discussions between the Ministries and the Head of State. This is why Agnès Buzyn, along with the other members of the Government, have the opportunity to discuss these issues frequently with Emmanuel Macron.