

SPEECH OF ROLAND LESCURE

Minister of State in charge of Industry | France

The 15th edition of the Convention on Health Analysis and Management (CHAM), which has been the subject of fruitful discussions, takes place during the drafting of the 2023 Social Security Finance Law (LFSS). The theme of relevance and quality in healthcare, addressed throughout the congress discussions, represents many challenges: ensuring access to healthcare products for all French citizens, the reindustrialization of France, while considering the constraints of public finances. These three challenges are among the priorities of the President of the French Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Health and Prevention, and the Minister delegate for Public Accounts.

A strong policy of reshoring and increasing French production capabilities

For the past 20 years, an increasing number of health products have been produced in Asia. Hence, since 2017, France has been actively implementing an ambitious reindustrialization policy. This reindustrialization plan was further strengthened in 2022 with the establishment of a support mechanism for industrial firms to help them bring back the production of essential medicines. All companies are encouraged to seize this opportunity. The government is also actively working on public procurement. Moreover, the government also focuses on training and skills development to enhance the competitiveness and economic growth of French companies. These policies are in line with the European Union member states.

Ensure supplies of “mature” products and rapid access to innovative products

A strategy to combat supply shortages for "mature" health products is currently being developed with the French Minister of Health and Prevention. Regarding innovative products, work is being carried out with the French Health Innovation Agency (AIS), to reinforce their early access as well as their direct market access in France and to promote the continuous improvement of new procedures. Direct access, which allows coverage for certain medications as soon as they receive approval from the French National Authority for Health (HAS), made possible by the LFSS 2022, is a noteworthy example.

Cautious prescription and use of medications limit healthcare expenses

Considering diagnostic and therapeutic advances, as well as the ageing population, spending on health products is likely to rise constantly and sharply in France. Historically, France has chosen to use price rather than volume as the means of controlling expenses and medication consumption. There needs to be a shift in the regulation philosophy, focusing on improving medication use and the relevance of prescriptions, based on the experience of other countries. Optimizing prescriptions and the consumption of healthcare products is not only a matter of healthcare quality and safety (fighting antibiotic resistance) but also an environmental concern (preventing product waste) and a financial sustainability issue (ensuring access to therapeutic innovations for everyone).

These discussions must be pursued with all the stakeholders of the healthcare system, from pharmacists and physicians to manufacturers, distributors, and patient representatives. Ensuring access to healthcare products for all and controlling expenses will be made possible through a widespread effort, while ensuring a fair distribution of value among all the stakeholders. The establishment of a real-time evaluation culture and the utilization of health data by artificial intelligence are among the levers to be activated in order to address this threefold challenge.