Synergies and balance in national health systems: the role of NPHIs

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The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission.
Lancet Synergies Commission
The role of NPHIs – in theory and practice
Questions for discussion
Countries represented include Australia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Columbia, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Nepal, Norway, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Uganda, USA, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe.

The Lancet Commission on synergies between universal health coverage, health security, and health promotion.
Global health is fragmented. Many stakeholders pursue their own agenda while neglecting other important goals for global health.
Three top agendas

Source: WHO/Draft thirteenth programme of work 2019-2023
The Commission has decided to address the question of fragmentation from the viewpoint of policymakers at the national level.

Some examples of relevant challenges

• Potential inefficiencies resulting from siloed / vertical disease control programs
• Lack of coordination across sectors that influence human health
• Non-alignment of donor and national priorities
A central aim of the Commission is to identify policies, institutional capacities, interventions or approaches that

• Enable better coordination in health systems to improve efficiency and outcomes (synergies)
• Balance competing priorities
What is the role of NPHIs in promoting synergies and balance?
In theory, NPHIs are positioned to promote synergies and balance in national health policy

NPHI CORE CAPACITY 1

Evaluation and analysis of health status
Collect data to understand the health status of the population, set priorities, and suggest interventions

- Gather or have access to data on vital statistics, potential threats to health, risk factors for disease and injury, and access to and use of personal health services.
- Use the data to guide policies and programs.

NPHI CORE CAPACITY 10

Public health research
Conduct research on high-priority issues

- Characterize the country’s most important health problems
- Provide other data important to decision-making
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Make sure that research findings are translated into decisions, policies, and programs

Source: National Public Health Institutes Core Functions & Attributes; IANPHI.org
In theory, NPHIs are positioned to promote synergies and balance in national health policy

CORE NPHI ATTRIBUTES

National scope of influence
National recognition
Limitations on political influence
Scientific basis for programs and policies
Focus on the country’s major public health problems
Adequate human and financial resources
Adequate infrastructure support
Linkages and networks
Accountability

Source: National Public Health Institutes Core Functions & Attributes; IANPHI.org
What are the actual effects of NPHIs?
The study

• Scoping review of literature identifying publications during last 40 years to document NPHI discourse

• Key informant interviews
  • NPHI experts and stakeholders
  • Former and current DGs of NPHIs or similar institutions
  • Senior officials in ministries of health

• Commissioner advisory group: David Heymann (UK), Mahlet Habtermanian (Ethiopia), Deisy Ventura (Brazil), Alpha Ahmadou Diallo (Guinea)
Sample questions for discussion

Do NPHIs contribute to:

• Better **coordination** in the health sector?
• Stronger **collaboration in the health sector**?
• **Policy coherence** among the three agendas of UHC, health security, health promotion?
• **Alignment** of national strategic plans or priorities?

And if yes – in what specific ways? What success stories exist?