

Surveillance in Health: the social right to health promotion and protection

The Federal Constitution of 1988 stipulates that “Health is a right of all and a duty of the state and shall be guaranteed by means of social and economic policies aimed at reducing the risk of illness and other hazards and at the universal and equal access to actions and services for its promotion, protection and recovery.”

The enforcement of this right shall be in the local and national territory and in political spaces where there is a collective responsibility to ensure that the fundamental objectives of the Republic have their respective consequences.

Health Surveillance is responsible for information and intervention that enable risk reduction and health promotion in the territories, in conjunction with the Health Care Networks. It is an essential function of the Unified Health System (SUS) and considers the complex economic, environmental, social and biological phenomena that determine the level and quality of health of all Brazilians, of all ages, seeking to control and reduce risks.

In this respect, the 1st National Conference on Health Surveillance (CNVS) arose based on the results of the 15th National Health Conference held in 2015, and pursuant to several debates in the National Health Council (CNS) around various agendas. Its core objective is “To propose guidelines for the formulation of the National Policy of Health Surveillance and the enforcement of actions for the Promotion and Protection of health.”

The central theme of the conference, “Health Surveillance: The Right, Conquest and Defense of a Quality Public SUS,” makes it possible for Health Surveillance to be considered one of the strategies for building a free, fair and inclusive society to ensure national development, eradicate poverty and marginalization, reduce social and regional inequalities, and promote the welfare of all, without prejudices of origin, race, gender, color, age, or any other form of discrimination.

One of the challenges is the establishment of a model of health care that is oriented towards reducing the risk of disease and other hazards, where promotion, protection and prevention are on the same footing and attributed the same importance as recovery and care.

The fact that a national conference on the theme is organized for the first time presents itself as a unique opportunity to broaden the dialogue in society regarding the integration of the field of surveillance with the Health Care Networks and its ability to promote and protect individual and collective health and sufficient funding to achieve it.

This thematic issue on Health Surveillance, elaborated within the context of the process of the 1st CNVS, by gathering analytical and proactive studies related to this topic, enhances and contributes to the debate on the definition of guidelines for the formulation of a National Policy of Health Surveillance by identifying contradictions, dilemmas and impasses to its elaboration.

The articles published in this issue provide readers with an important benchmark for the debates surrounding the current challenges facing Health Surveillance, such as: threats, dangers, risks, vulnerabilities, hazards and detriments to health; the place of Health Surveillance in the SUS; guaranteed access; Health Surveillance as the driving force in the model of health care; territorialization and regionalization; the integration and the role of surveillance units in health in the full integration of individual and collective care throughout the Health Care Network; the integration of know-how, practices, work processes and technologies in Health Surveillance and social participation in the empowerment of Health Surveillance.

Good reading!

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