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ROONGSIRI KAMTRAKUL: THAILAND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES (2020). THESIS ADVISOR: THONGLAW DEJTHAI, D.H.Sc., CHUMPOL POOLPATARACHEWIN, Ph.D., VORADEJ CHANDARASORN, Ph.D., DAMRONG BOONYOEN, Dr.P.H. 319 p. ISBN 974-664-545-5

Futures research in health management is very new in Thailand even though it has been around for over 50 years. The main objectives of this research was to study strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of present Thailand health management, and identify future scenarios of Thailand health management in the next two decades (2020) in terms of missions and roles, structures, resources, and managerial processes as well as functions of various related agencies. The Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) was utilized for data collection. A total of 67 informants including health administrators from central, regional, and local levels, related agencies, and academicians were purposively selected according to research criteria and interviewed. The Delphi questionnaire was designed to identify future trends of Thailand health management in 2020. Median, a different score between mode and median, and interquartile range were used to interpret the results.

It was found that the major strength of present Thailand health management was the structure. There were service facilities covering all levels throughout the country. The overall system was staffed with highly qualified personnel. The Provincial Chief Medical Officers were authorized to administer all health activities in provinces. However, this pattern was also viewed to present some weaknesses in such a way that health care service and facilities were inappropriate and overutilized due to an easy access. Many health care facilities were concentrated in Bangkok and big cities, especially private hospitals and clinics. The other weaknesses were poor coordination between the Ministry of Public Health and other health partners, weak control and monitoring mechanism on private sector, incapable of producing high technological applications, and mainly dependent on foreign technologies. The economic crisis and political interference were the major threats to health management. However, there were some opportunities that health care reform could be accepted without strong resistance. Delegation of authority and decentralization were also stipulated according to the new constitution. There were chances that national orders and society could be revitalized through community participation. Special interests in health of the Royal Family had contributed a great deal to the success of health management in Thailand.

By 2020, different local bodies would be responsible for health care management according to national health policy and plans established by a national board of health that consisted of all involved parties including public and private sectors as well as people's representatives. The ministry of public health would link between national and local levels. Provincial Health and District Health Offices would coordinate, monitor, and consult at local level for technical matters. Some of health care facilities from Tambon level and higher would be transferred to be under the jurisdiction of strong and high income local administrative bodies or become the independent public organizations run by local administrative bodies and people share holders. Provincial and district health administrators as well as hospital directors must be trained in special courses before appointments. They would not necessary be physicians. There would be committee and system for administrator selection in each level. Health plans include short-range (2-3 years) and long-range (5-10 years) plans. Program plan focuses on quality of life, good living conditions, health promotion and disease prevention, and the enhancement of equity in health services through health insurance system.