

Health Insurance for Undocumented Migrants: A Literature Review in Developed Countries

Yaowaluk Wanwong BSc*, Sirinard Nipaporn PhD**, Prapaporn Nopparattayaporn MSc***, Waraporn Pongkanta MA*, Weerasak Putthasri PhD*, Rapeepong Suphanchaimat MD*,****

* *International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health, Nonthaburi, Thailand*

** *National Health Security Office (NHSO), Bangkok, Thailand*

*** *Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand*

**** *Banphai Hospital, Khon Kaen, Thailand*

Background: *Undocumented migrants are a population that is of concern in the policy discourse in many countries, including Thailand.*

Objective: *Draw lessons regarding the health insurance management for undocumented migrants in certain developed countries.*

Material and Method: *Literature reviews were conducted on academic literatures of the European Union (EU) and relevant journals and websites. Constant comparison was used for data analysis. Four EU nations (France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom) and two non-EU nations (Japan and the United States) were selected.*

Results: *In principle, the degree of care could be categorized into three levels, namely, 1) emergency services, 2) primary care and emergency services, and 3) (almost) full range of care. These levels were overlapping and the countries always faced operational problems from different legal interpretations and ignorance of health care rights and benefits amongst both providers and users. Based on the constant comparison synthesis, the insurance management for migrants in most countries was sorted into four tiers, 1) the insurance for legal migrants, 2) the insurance for illegal migrants who later registered with the state, 3) the insurance for certain populations, such as pregnant women and children and patients with communicable diseases, and (4) the special funding for health facilities to recoup the treatment cost from caring the uninsured patients.*

Conclusion: *The review findings here may serve as a valuable lesson for Thailand to better manage its health care system for migrants (particularly amongst the undocumented) and to make it more effective and equitable implement.*

Keywords: *Migrants, Health insurance, Literature review, Health financing*

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At present, human mobility is reached its peak in the world history. It is estimated that more than 214 million people are living outside their own countries. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that if the international migration continues at the same pace as in the last two decades, the size of international migrants worldwide will exceed 405 million by 2050⁽¹⁾.

Traditionally, most policy discourses emphasized on the movement of population from low and middle income countries (LMICs) to more developed countries, most of which are situated above the equator, so-called 'South-North' migration. Yet, recent evidence shows that the number of

'South-South' migration has been sharply growing, from less than 20 million in 1990 to almost 60 million in 2010, almost a triple expansion in two decades, whereas the 'South-North' migration remained stable at 45 million during the same period⁽²⁾. This phenomenon is likely explained by many factors such as an increasing demand for labor in response to fast economic growth in the developing nations, political instability, and domestic violence. Therefore, the 'South-South' migration pathway has drawn much attention from many policy makers and academicians, leading to a significant change in the sphere of political debates in the migration field^(2,3).

Thailand is a country in the Southeast Asia region that serves as one of the popular destinations of migrants. So far, the country is the residence of over 3 million migrants. The majority of these migrants are migrant workers and dependents from neighboring countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar [CLM])

Correspondence to:

Suphanchaimat R, International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health, Tiwanon Road, Nonthaburi 11000, Thailand.

Phone: +66-2-5902367, Fax: +66-2-5902385

E-mail: rapeepong@ihpp.thaigov.net