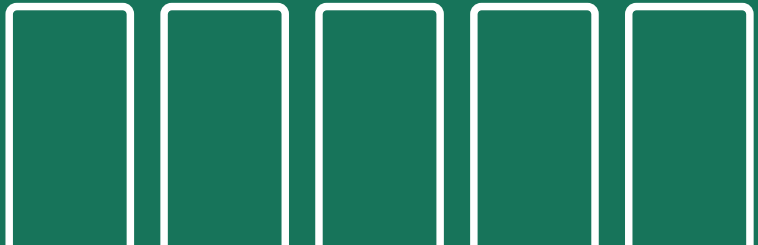


interpharma<sup>ph</sup>

**Principles** for  
a sustainable  
Swiss healthcare  
system



## Our principles for a sustainable Swiss healthcare system



The Swiss healthcare system faces major challenges. An ageing population and the growing demands created by medical progress are creating cost pressure.

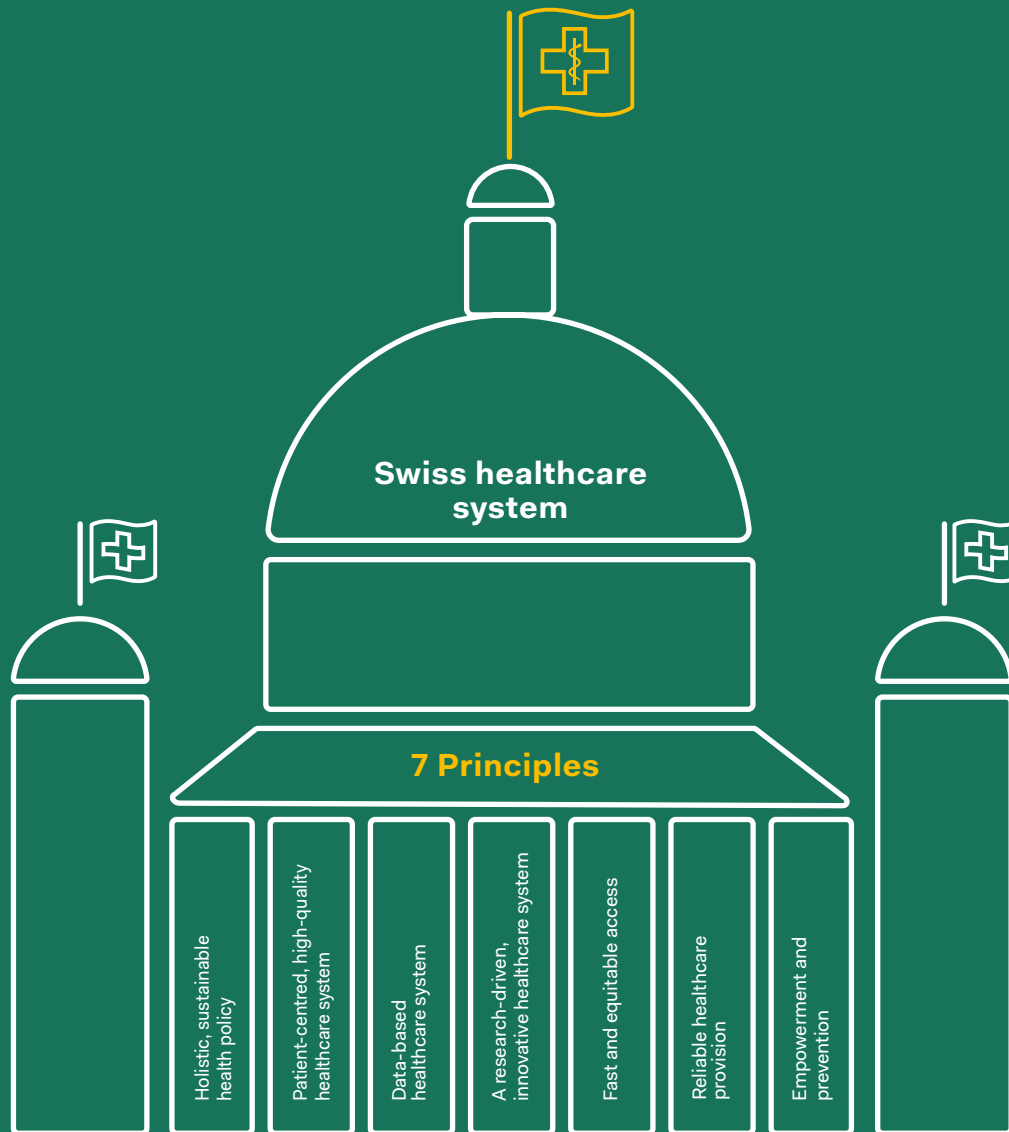
International conflicts, increased protectionism and outdated approval and pricing regulations are jeopardising supply reliability and Switzerland is lagging far behind other countries on digitalisation. Since Interpharma is an important and experienced player in the healthcare sector – we celebrated our 90th anniversary in 2023 – we see it as our role and our responsibility to contribute actively to the ongoing development of the healthcare system in Switzerland. In view of these challenges, we have defined guiding principles to provide a compass for the ongoing development of the Swiss healthcare system. These seven principles are explained in more detail below. There is no order of precedence – each principle is equal in status to the others.

The principles are complementary to our «Pharma hub Switzerland 2030» strategy.

This strategy outlines a vision, mission and strategic focal areas describing ways in which the pharmaceutical industry, government and the authorities can jointly contribute to the development of a successful pharma and research hub and safeguard patient access to innovative medicines. Whereas countries such as Denmark, the United Kingdom, Italy and, more recently, Germany have developed their own strategies to improve their competitiveness in the pharma arena, the Swiss government has not yet taken the opportunity to work with all stakeholders to develop a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the country as a pharma and research hub. We at Interpharma are confident that a dynamic research and production hub is an indispensable guarantor both of an innovative, high-quality healthcare system and of prosperity in Switzerland. We look forward to entering into a dialog and working together with all stakeholders to prepare the healthcare system for the future.



# Principles for a sustainable Swiss healthcare system



## Holistic, sustainable health policy

- Holistic health policy with coherent objectives, strategy and mandate
- Robust concept for a sustainably financed healthcare system in changing demographic conditions
- Effective management and cooperation between all players to reduce silo mentalities

## Patient-centred, high-quality healthcare system

- Patient benefit and quality of delivery at the centre of the healthcare system (value-based healthcare)
- Better quality of treatment resulting from all professionals involved in treatment recording and having access to patients' health data (treatments and outcomes)

## Data-based healthcare system

- Nationwide digital healthcare system infrastructure for improved communication and cooperation between all players, greater efficiency and cost control
- A national data ecosystem and access to health data as a basis for researching and developing innovations

## A research-driven, innovative healthcare system

- Strong basic research, advantageous environment for start-ups and attractive framework conditions for clinical trials as the foundation of a state-of-the-art healthcare system
- Internationally networked research and effective protection of intellectual property
- Guarantee of an innovation-friendly environment in the healthcare system

## Fast and equitable access

- Equitable access to high-quality basic care for all insured patients in Switzerland
- Fast patient access to treatments once the prescribed official approvals have been issued
- Strong Swissmedic with efficient approval procedures and attractive reimbursement process at the FOPH

## Reliable healthcare provision

- Safeguarding reliable healthcare provision in the face of growing protectionism and demographic trends
- Stable prerequisites for reliable medicine supply, availability of skilled staff and strong international networking and stable relations with the EU

## Empowerment and prevention

- Strengthening empowerment by improving health literacy
- Promoting health by targeted measures, focusing particularly on risk groups
- Prevention as a tool for improving public health and reducing the burden on the healthcare system

## Holistic, sustainable health policy

Government and society must develop a holistic, sustainable health policy for our country. Given demographic trends, constantly growing medical options and the associated rise in demands, new approaches are needed to safeguard the quality of the Swiss health-care system, as well as access and funding.

The process of defining this strategy must focus on the benefits to patients. A coherent strategy with tangible goals and measures will only come together if all health-

care players are on board, seek dialogue and work together constructively. The players in question include the Confederation, cantons, health insurers, service providers such as hospitals, doctors, nursing homes and pharmacies, patients and the pharmaceutical industry. It is incumbent on all players to detach themselves from silo mentalities and develop a holistic perspective with the overarching goal of developing a high-quality, sustainable healthcare system for the future. [ph](#)



## Patient-centred, high-quality healthcare system

Patient benefit and service quality must be at the centre of the healthcare system. This conviction is expressed in the patient-centred approach that has become known internationally as value-based healthcare. To ensure optimal, result-driven treatment, the result of the treatment pathway must be centre-stage. This requires effective coordination beyond individual specialist areas; integrated delivery where patient benefit is at the centre and not the result of the individual disciplines.

The various specialists and specialist disciplines must work together on this goal. This means that all treatment providers have to have the same digital access to medical records. It also means results having to be

measured and treatment teams discussing ways of improving outcomes. This will yield greater quality, less duplication, and fewer errors and complications, which will ultimately help reduce costs. However, it will only be possible to compete on quality if high-quality health data are available. Interpharma's goal is to drive forward implementation of the value-based healthcare approach in partnership with other players in Switzerland. One thing we and other partners in the healthcare sector agree on is that cooperation between players and financing issues in healthcare should be increasingly geared to focusing on patient benefits and on making the associated outcome data usable. [ph](#)




## Data-based healthcare system

One key element in the ongoing development of the Swiss healthcare system is the construction of nationwide digital infrastructure. Infrastructure of this type permits seamless communication and cooperation between medical professionals and institutions, authorities, health insurers, manufacturers and patients. It helps reduce bureaucracy, enhance efficiency and sustainably contain costs. In addition, higher levels of connectedness make it easier for players to plan and adapt, particularly in crisis situations, such as during a pandemic. This in turn benefits the population and all players in the healthcare system. A digitalised healthcare system also promotes transparency concerning the quality of the healthcare service providers, which in turn has a large positive impact on quality of care.

Digitalisation of the healthcare system is also paving the way for innovation in research by providing the foundation on which to build a national data ecosystem. Once health data have been recorded in a standardised digital format, they can be

made available to researchers through a national data ecosystem – a starting point for the development of new therapies and innovative medicines that is as yet untried in Switzerland. This will require uniform standards, as well as efficient and secure interfaces for the data recorded and a clearly defined legal framework governing the use of the data (for research, for example).

While many countries have recognised the opportunities presented by digitalisation in the healthcare system, Switzerland is still lagging far behind internationally. If Switzerland is to make up ground, it must quickly drive forward the digital transformation of its healthcare system and invest in the establishment of a joined-up health data ecosystem. The time has come to break down silo mentalities and provide the necessary start-up funding and clear political leadership that are needed to get the Swiss healthcare system fit for the future. 

## A research-driven, innovative healthcare system


Given its limited natural resources, education, research and innovation are essential to safeguard Switzerland's ability to compete internationally going forward. The pharmaceutical companies are a driving force of Switzerland's research hub, investing around CHF 9.6 billion in research and development in the country, and play a key role in the development of an innovative healthcare system. But investment is not enough on its own.

If Switzerland is to maintain its position as the world's most innovative country (according to the Global Innovation Index), it requires competitive framework conditions for researchers, optimal levels of networking, and cooperation between academia, spin-offs, start-ups and industry. Nowadays, top-flight research is impossible without national and international networking between researchers, since research has not been limited by institutional or national boundaries for a long time now. A research-friendly environment and attractive framework con-

ditions are thus crucial for basic research to come up with innovations that can be developed to clinical trial stage in Switzerland. Society, government and the healthcare system need to be fundamentally open to innovation and new technologies. This applies particularly to the use of artificial intelligence. To ensure research and innovation remain key drivers of the Swiss economy and the country's prosperity, protecting intellectual property is also highly significant as the key incentive for private investors to put money into research. 

## Fast and equitable access

Fast and equitable access to medical services is the top priority for patients and Interpharma alike. Access to the healthcare system through compulsory basic insurance is the springboard for doing so. The Swiss population has a justifiable entitlement to rapid access to high-quality healthcare provision, and everyone must have equal access through their basic insurance. Efficient approval procedures for new medicines and treatments are of major importance, as is bolstering the competent authorities. The technical and legal framework for innovative reimbursement models should be defined to permit rapid access to novel therapies.


As an association, we support Swiss-medical's efforts to rank as one of the world's leading regulatory authorities. We are in a constructive dialogue on continuously improving processes, promoting international cooperation and anticipating the framework conditions that will be required for new developments and technologies. From our perspective, the FOPH reimbursement process needs major improvement. It is unacceptable that patients in Switzerland have to wait months or even years in some cases until innovative medicines are added to the list of reimbursable products. That is why we are committed to comprehensive process modernisation that will give the people affected faster access to urgently needed treatments. 

## Reliable healthcare provision

Alongside strong framework conditions for the research and development hub, a pragmatic dialogue between the authorities, industry and science is needed to guarantee efficient and reliable healthcare provision. In doing so, it is important to take a broader perspective. Open borders and international connections and cooperation are hugely important – particularly in small national economies – not only in safeguarding the mobility of skilled workers, but also in ensuring a reliable supply of health products. Stable relations between Switzerland and

the EU, our biggest sales and procurement market, play a key role here. Given the growing tendency towards protectionism, a broad range of measures is needed to safeguard healthcare delivery. However, these measures do not include nationalism and isolationism. Instead, Switzerland should resist these tendencies at international level. Furthermore, the availability of skilled workers in the healthcare system is essential in ensuring reliable healthcare provision. This will require attractive and competitive working conditions, first-class


training opportunities and a liberal labour market. Given the foreseeable long-term shortage of skilled workers, innovation will

be key to enhancing efficiency and to guaranteeing both the availability and quality of services nationwide. 

## Empowerment and prevention

Targeted prevention and effective empowerment have an essential role in the process of creating a sustainable, efficient healthcare system. Public empowerment and health literacy should be promoted so that people can use clear information to make decisions and initiate their own health promotion and prevention measures without the need for state intervention.

Prevention is the key to a healthier population and an important component of a holistic health strategy. It is essential here that this strategy takes account of demographic trends and the associated increase in chronic disease. It is not enough to encourage the public to adopt healthier habits. Health risks need to be systematically identified – and, if necessary, addressed – at an early stage.

This reduces the frequency and severity of diseases, improves people's quality of life and decreases the cost to the healthcare system. Prevention activities should pay particular attention to the needs of risk groups, focusing especially on the early identification of disease, education and health literacy, promoting exercise and vaccination programmes as well as targeted health programmes for specific population groups. 

## About Interpharma

Interpharma, the association of the research-based pharmaceutical industry in Switzerland, represents the country's strongest export sector. The value of pharmaceutical products sold abroad each year amounts to around 105 billion Swiss francs. Our member companies have more than 90 percent of the market share of patented medicines in Switzerland and invest around CHF 9.6 billion annually in research and development in this country.



© Interpharma, 2024, Basel

The association of Switzerland's research-based pharmaceutical industry

Petersgraben 35, Postfach, CH-4009 Basel

Phone: +41 (0) 61 264 34 00

E-mail: [info@interpharma.ch](mailto:info@interpharma.ch)

Website: [www.interpharma.ch](http://www.interpharma.ch)