

WEBINAR BRIEF

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE WEBINAR: BRIDGING HEALTH SYSTEMS

Webinar 1: Designing benefit packages for Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Egypt x Chile

April 2025

Acknowledgements: We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed to the success of this session, jointly organized by the Egypt Impact Lab (EIL) at J-PAL MENA, the Universal Health Insurance Authority (UHIA), and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Egypt. We are especially grateful to our keynote speakers-Dr. Nima Saeed Abid (WHO Egypt) and Ms. Mai Farid (UHIA), as well as to H.E. Dr. Emilio Santelices, former Minister of Health of Chile, for sharing his invaluable international experience. We also thank our technical experts, Dr. Ahmed Seyam and Dr. Matthew Jowett, for their insightful contributions. Your efforts were instrumental in bringing this knowledge exchange to fulfillment.

LAUNCHING THE SERIES

On April 23, 2025, the [Egypt Impact Lab](#) (EIL), in collaboration with the [Universal Health Insurance Authority](#) (UHIA) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) in Egypt, launched the first session of the [Knowledge Exchange Webinar Series – Bridging Health Systems](#). This new government-to-government learning initiative aims to foster practical dialogue between policymakers and technical experts on implementing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) reforms. The webinar series is a cornerstone of EIL's work to strengthen the knowledge ecosystem by creating space for sharing global experiences, evidence, and tools that inform local reform strategies.

OPENING REFLECTIONS

The session opened with welcoming remarks from [Dr. Ahmed Elsayed](#), Executive Director of J-PAL MENA; [Dr. Nima Saeed Abid](#), WHO Representative in Egypt; and [Ms. Mai Farid](#), CEO of UHIA. Speakers underscored the importance of health financing reform in Egypt, particularly in the face of high out-of-pocket expenditures and systemic fragmentation. They emphasized the centrality of evidence-based policy and cross-country learning in designing equitable and financially sustainable benefit packages under Egypt's Universal Health Insurance System (UHIS). Their reflections set the tone for a dynamic discussion informed by local policy realities and global innovations.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

[Dr. Matthew Jowett](#), Unit Head for Health Financing at WHO, delivered a recorded presentation offering foundational reflections on benefit package design. He emphasized that benefit design is not just a list of entitlements, but a broader policy instrument shaped by complementary health financing decisions—including conditions of access, co-payments, referral systems, and service delivery capacity. Drawing on the example of Thailand, Dr. Jowett outlined a systematic and participatory process for benefit inclusion, emphasizing the need for criteria such as burden of disease, cost-effectiveness, and equity. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that new benefits are not only selected wisely but also delivered equitably and efficiently across the health system.

[Dr. Ahmed Seyam](#), Deputy CEO for Technical Affairs at UHIA, shared Egypt's roadmap toward universal health coverage, detailing the country's transition from a fragmented system to the new UHIS. He described the architecture of Egypt's evolving health financing model, including the role of UHIA as the strategic purchaser and the shift to output-based provider payments. Dr. Seyam highlighted progress made on defining Egypt's benefit package—including a complete primary care package, a comprehensive drug formulary, and standardized provider payment mechanisms—while also pointing to ongoing gaps such as the absence of unified benefit package criteria, inconsistencies across parallel schemes, and limited governance frameworks for inclusion and revision of services. He outlined UHIA's next steps, including completing service mapping, refining reimbursement guidance, and establishing national clinical guidelines and a unified Health Technology Assessment process.

[H.E. Dr. Emilio Santelices](#), Former Minister of Health in Chile, offered a global lens by walking participants through Chile’s experience with benefit package reform. He described how Chile established explicit health guarantees for citizens, moving toward equity by harmonizing entitlements across public and private schemes. He emphasized the importance of strong governance, social dialogue, and a clear implementation roadmap. For Egypt, his presentation illustrated how benefit design can act as a lever for broader system transformation when grounded in equity and transparency.

INFORMING ONGOING COLLABORATIONS WITH UHIA AND WHO

This webinar has directly enriched and informed our ongoing collaboration with UHIA and WHO in Egypt in evaluating the impact of the UHIS. The exchange of international experiences and discussions around data-driven policymaking has helped sharpen the focus of our evaluation design efforts, particularly in identifying priority areas for evidence generation and policy relevance. The insights shared by speakers from Chile and Egypt are being integrated into the design and implementation of our impact evaluation, ensuring it is grounded in global best practices and tailored to Egypt’s unique reform context.

LOOKING AHEAD

This session marks the first in a four-part webinar series designed to promote evidence-informed health policy and practical learning across countries. Upcoming sessions will delve deeper into benefit package reform—next featuring Thailand’s experience—followed by webinars on primary healthcare contracting and the inclusion of informal sector workers, with lessons from different countries. The next session is scheduled to take place in two months, and invitations will be shared in due course. A recording of this webinar will be found [here](#) to support continued learning and engagement.