Our Health in 2040 – Four visions of the future of public health

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), The Netherlands, organises a lunch meeting on ‘Our Health in 2040’. The meeting is based on the key findings from the Dutch 2014 Public Health Status and Foresight Report: A Healthier Netherlands. Casper Schoemaker and Henk Hilderink (RIVM) will share their experiences of working with different future public health scenarios. Together with Colin Fischbacher (NHS Scotland) and Heidi Lyshol (Norwegian Institute of Public Health), they will discuss the usefulness of working with scenarios for policymaking in Europe. Chair of the meeting is Hans van Oers (RIVM).

Scenarios are an invaluable tool for analyzing complex systems and understanding possible outcomes. The Dutch 2014 Public Health Status and Foresight Report provides a broad overview of the most important trends in Dutch public health. In the coming years, life expectancy will continue to rise, with large differences between population groups. More people will live with a chronic disease and health care costs will increase. What does this mean for the future of public health? Which of these trends do we want to tackle first? Opinions differ on what is most important. To make Europe healthier, we need to use these differences in developing a stronger strategy.

Four scenarios
In this lunch meeting, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) will present four future scenarios based on different normative perspectives on public health, each with its own challenge:

- In the best of health: Keep everyone healthy and cure diseases;
- Everyone participates: support the ‘less able’ in society and promote participation;
- Taking personal control: promote autonomy and freedom of choice;
- Healthy prosperity: Keep health care affordable.

The discussion will focus on the confrontation of the four scenarios: how do we ensure that policy measures serve multiple challenges, and where do policy measures designed to tackle one challenge hamper other challenges? What are the no-regret options and what are the choices?

Downloads of the report in English and Dutch
To access the English version of the key findings of the 2014 Public Health Status and Foresight Report, click here. The full version of the report can be consulted in Dutch at www.eengezondernederland.nl.