



2025 Thai UHC Journey Workshop

(Sustainable UHC for better health: The SAFE Path—Sustainability, Adequacy, Fairness, and Efficiency)

November 24-28, 2025, at 9.00-16.00 Hrs, Bangkok, Thailand

A. Background

Background

As the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approaches, the world remains significantly off track to meet SDG Target 3.8, which aspires to universal health coverage (UHC). Coverage of essential health services has stalled, while the proportion of people facing catastrophic health expenditures continues to rise. In 2021, more than 4.5 billion people still lacked access to essential health services, and in 2019, approximately 2 billion people incurred catastrophic or impoverishing health spending due to out-of-pocket payments [1].

Countries are now contending with a convergence of complex global challenges, including demographic transitions, rising healthcare costs, economic instability, climate-related health shocks, and weakening global solidarity. The landscape of global health governance is shifting, characterized by declining official development assistance (ODA), reduced donor commitments, and an increasing reliance on loans that exacerbate debt burdens for low-income countries. These trends underscore the urgent need for innovative and sustainable health financing mechanisms, as well as inclusive governance systems that can adapt to evolving needs and ensure access to care for all.

Since the launch of UHC in 2002, Thailand has made remarkable progress in improving population health, driven by knowledge generation, public engagement, and strong political will. However, the Thai UHC system now faces new pressures brought about by shifting societal dynamics, including population aging, declining birth rates, rapid technological advancement, epidemiological transitions, and economic fluctuations. Key concerns include disparities in access to care due to differences in benefit packages across health insurance schemes, financial sustainability challenges stemming from socioeconomic changes, the need for greater management efficiency, the imperative to maintain quality in medical services, and persistent inequities in healthcare access for remote and vulnerable populations [2,3,4].

These emerging conditions demand that Thailand's UHC system continue to evolve to remain relevant, responsive, and resilient. The focus must be on ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare, optimizing resource mobilization and utilization, and upholding a health financing system that is sustainable, adequate, fair, and efficient.

Importantly, these challenges are not unique to Thailand. Many low- and middle-income countries are facing similar structural and systemic challenges as they strive to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Meeting these shared challenges requires sound investment, evidence-informed policymaking, and innovative financing models that strike a balance between sustainability, equity, and efficiency.

The workshop is co-hosted by the National Health Security Office (NHSO), the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth), the National Health Commission Office (NHCO), and the International Health Policy Program Foundation (IHPP Foundation), along with partner networks such as the Enhancing Leadership on Global Health-

Thailand (EnLIGHT) Program under the WHO Country Cooperation Strategy (WHO-CCS), and the GLO+UHC Phase 3 Partnership Project.

The Thai UHC Journey Workshop 2025 is scheduled to take place from **November 24 to 28, 2025**, in **Bangkok, Thailand**. It aims to showcase Thailand's experiences in sustainable health financing and policy innovation while fostering mutual learning and capacity-building among countries striving to build resilient, equitable, and inclusive Universal Health Coverage (UHC) systems.

[1] https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB156/B156_6-en.pdf

[2] Thailand, U.N.P.F.C.O.i., *Impact Demographic Change in Thailand*. 2011: UNFPA Thailand

[3] Lorenzoni, A.M.a.L. *The impact of technological advancements on health spending: A literature review*. OECD Health Working Papers, 2019. **No. 113**.

[4] Mongkhonsuebsakul, W., *Thailand's Access to Healthcare Services: The reflection and inequality of Vulnerable Group*. SAU JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES, 2022. **1**(Jan-Jun 2022): p. 15.

B. Objectives

1. **To explore Thailand's journey toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** by examining its health system architecture, financing reforms, and innovations, such as the S-A-F-E model and strategic purchasing mechanisms.
2. **To facilitate dialogue on sustainable health financing in the context of global challenges**, including demographic shifts, economic transitions, and reduced development assistance.
3. **To exchange country experiences and policy innovations** in areas such as value-based care, health promotion financing (e.g., sin taxes), and participatory governance for UHC.
4. **To strengthen regional and international collaboration** by building networks among policymakers, practitioners, and development partners committed to achieving sustainable and equitable UHC.

C. Application Guidelines

C.1 Application:

C.1.1 Application Form: Please complete the application form via this link <https://shorturl.at/2vKf9>

C.1.2 Required Documents for the application:

1) A copy of your passport (JPG/PDF)

2) The confirmation form for your participation in the workshop (JPG/PDF)

* Download the confirmation form by this link https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k_cNP-uSBtwQZfwVNeSZY-SdxxiCtFzK/view?usp=sharing

** All required documents, please submit together with the application form shown in C.1.1

C.2 Participants Selection Criteria;

C.2.1 Professionals working in fields such as health policy and planning, health financing and budgeting, global health and development, health economics and research, health promotion and disease prevention, health systems strengthening, or civil society and community engagement.

C.2.2 Currently engaged at the national, provincial, or city level in relevant health-related roles.

C.2.3 Able to commit to full participation for the entire duration of the workshop in Thailand.

C.2.4 Proficient in spoken and written English for effective communication and engagement.

C.2.5 Aged 45 years or younger at the time of the workshop.

C.3 Important Dates.

C.3.1 September 19, 2025: Deadline for application submission

C.3.2 1st week of October, 2025: Announcement of selected participants on the website and by e-mail

C.3.3 October 31, 2025: Deadline for attendance confirmation

D. Logistic Information

D.1 Financial Responsibilities

D.1.1 Responsibilities of the Host Organizations:

The host organizations will cover the workshop-related expenses, including the meeting package (two coffee breaks and lunch per day) throughout the duration of the workshop.

D.1.2 Responsibilities of the Participants:

Participants will be responsible for the following costs:

1. International or Domestic Airfare
2. Domestic transportation within their home country and in Thailand (e.g., airport transfers)
3. Travel-related expenses, including passport, visa, health insurance, and medical certificates
4. Hotel accommodation during the workshop
5. Per diem and personal expenses during the workshop

D.2 Workshop Venue.

Bangkok, Thailand

Phone: (66) 63 506 2289, (66) 93 580 6260

Email: thaiuhcjourney@gmail.com

D.3 Entering Thailand / Visa Procedures

D.3.1 Visa requirement: Please find the visa requirement information from

<https://consular.mfa.go.th/th/index>. If you need to obtain a visa, please submit your application in person at the nearest Royal Thai Embassy or Royal Thai Consulate General. According to the Immigration Bureau of Thailand, Nationals of the following countries/ regions may enter and stay in Thailand for a maximum period of 30 days without a visa

D.3.2 Visa Exemption and Visa On Arrival to Thailand:

<https://image.mfa.go.th/mfa/0/zE6021nSnu/%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A3/VOA.pdf>

D.3.3 All foreign nationals are required to complete the **Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) at least 3 days before their scheduled arrival date** in Thailand. Please visit <https://tdac.immigration.go.th/arrival-card/#/home>

D.4 Funding Opportunities

To encourage participation from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), the program offers the following support:

D.4.1 Partial Scholarships: Four partial scholarships of up to USD 1,000 each will be awarded to select participants from Vietnam, the Philippines, and Lao PDR. The scholarship will cover round-trip airfare and accommodation for 4 nights, subject to individual need and available funds.

D.4.2 Accommodation support: Accommodation support will be provided to five selected participants from LMICs for the duration of the program. All other expenses including airfare will be the responsibility of the participants.

D.5 Contact persons: Main Email thaiuhcjourney@gmail.com

Miss Doungtawan Sang-ngoen, Research Assistant, International Health Policy Program Foundation, (doungtawan.s@ihpp.thaigov.net)

Ms. Miss Nuttha Siri wattanapisan, Specialist, International Collaboration on UHC Division, Policy Advocacy Unit, National Health Security Office (nuttha.s@nhso.go.th)

E. Tentative Workshop Program	
Day 1: November 24, 2025	Theme: Foundations of UHC and Health Financing in Thailand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Ceremony • Workshop Overview and Objectives • Journey of Thailand's Health System and UHC • S-A-F-E: from concept to implementation
Day 2: November 25, 2025	Theme: Strategic Purchasing and Innovations in Health Financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Universal Coverage Scheme (UCS) • Payment Mechanisms and Strategic Purchasing under the UCS • Innovative Health Financing: Translating Policy into Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Value-Based Healthcare ○ Reducing Inefficiencies: Case Study on Low-Value Care • Japan's Approach to Sustainable Health Financing in an Aging Society
Day 3: November 26, 2025	Morning Session 1: Health Promotion Financing – ThaiHealth Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Overview of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Financing in Thailand. A summary of Thailand's financing landscape and roles of key actors in promoting health and preventing disease across populations. • Innovative and Sustainable Financing Mechanisms for Health Promotion [Focusing on Sustainability and Adequacy of SAFE Model]. Exploring creative and long-term funding models—such as sin tax-based mechanisms exemplified by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation—for driving health promotion initiatives. • Health Taxes and Complementary Strategies to Tackle Unhealthy Behaviors and Social Determinants of Health in Support of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) [Focusing on Fairness and Efficiency of SAFE Model]. A look into how health-related taxes and other policy interventions can reduce risk factors, influence behavior change, and address upstream social determinants to strengthen sustainable UHC systems. Afternoon Session 2: Social Participation and Participatory Governance for UHC, Health and Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social participation is not just about listening – it's about sharing power in decision-making. In Thailand, the National Health Commission Office (NHCO) model shows how embedding structured and inclusive participation mechanisms, such as the National and Provincial Health Assemblies, helps sustain Health Coverage (UHC) and shape health policies that are more responsive, equitable, and accountable. • A key strategy involves strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to actively and meaningfully co-create policies through participatory governance platforms. This approach ensures that diverse voices, including those from vulnerable and marginalized communities, are meaningfully involved in shaping the health and well-being agenda at all levels.

Day 4: November 27, 2025	Field trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-Based Policy in Action: Thailand's PD-First Approach Toward Sustainable and Efficient UHC Afternoon visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Health Assembly side meeting
Day 5: November 28, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report back by participants Closing Ceremony