

FINLAND

Recent changes in pharmaceutical policy measures and developments in pharmaceutical expenditure

Major changes in pharmaceutical policy in 2012–2013

Pricing

- **VAT** on medicines raised from 9% to 10% on Jan 1, 2013
- **5% price cut** on reasonable wholesale prices of reimbursable medicinal products not included in the Reference Price System on Feb 1, 2013

Reimbursement

- on Feb 1, 2013, **changes in reimbursement rates:**
 - Basic Reimbursement rate from 42% to 35%
 - Lower Special Reimbursement rate from 72% to 65%
 - Higher Special Reimbursement rate remained 100%
- on Jan 1, 2013, **annual limit of co-payments was lowered** to €670. In 2012 the limit was €701.

Development of reimbursement payments 2007–2012

Reimbursement of medicine costs in 2007–2012, at 2012 prices.

Year	Million €	Change from previous year
2007	1279.7	+1.3%
2008	1338.4	+4.6%
2009	1340.3	+0.1%
2010	1303.5	–2.7%
2011	1297.5	0.0%
2012	1303.1	+0.4%

Source: Finnish Statistics on Medicines 2011, Kela: Kuukausitilasto 2012, Consumer Price Index 1950=100.

Outlook

The Working Group on Medicines' Reimbursements (WG) published its report in Jan 2013. WG proposes further lowering of the annual co-payment ceiling to improve patients' access to medicines. WG also proposes that patients should pay the full price for medicines up to a certain level (annual threshold), after which the medicines would be refunded as before – i.e., as percentage of retail price differentiated by disease severity. According to the WG, implementation of an approx. €50 annual threshold would allow lowering the annual co-payment ceiling by €140 and also increasing the level of reimbursement rates. Majority of the WG advocated retaining a disease-specific scheme.

Impact of measures and evaluation

Measures implemented in 2013 are expected to decrease the state pharmaceutical spending by 8% annually. (103 million € in 2013 and 113 million € in 2014). According to the simulations, 10% of the patients will pay at least €30 more and 3% at least €30 less annually for their medicines than before the changes. The median annual co-payment per patient is expected to increase from €56 to €62 and the number of patients who exceed the annual co-payment limit is expected to rise by 30%.

Due to the price cuts a total of 117 presentations (45 different brands) were removed by the industry from the list of reimbursed products.