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Institutional and Legal Mechanisms of Public Management of Healthcare Service Quality and Workforce Development in Ukraine in the Context of European Integration

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ABSTRACT

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To ensure the quality of medical services and staff development, it is important to create effective and effective institutional and legal mechanisms of public management in this area. European integration has become a factor in accelerating the transformation of state institutions and changing the regulatory framework in the field of health care in Ukraine. The purpose of the article was to study the institutional and legal mechanisms of public management of the quality of medical services and the development of personnel in the field of health care in Ukraine, taking into account European integration processes. The research methodology is based on the legal analysis of the current legislation in the field of health care in Ukraine, and statistical analysis of the available human resources. The results demonstrate progress in the development of institutional mechanisms of public management in the field of health care in the areas of management strategy and policy, financing of medical services, quality assurance of medical services and development of human resources. Transformational changes in the activities of state institutions in the medical field have had a positive impact on the accessibility, quality of medical services, compliance with standards in the provision of services, increasing the level of responsibility of medical institutions for the results of service provision. The reform of public management institutions has affected the development of professional medical personnel in the context of competition for patients. The adoption of new legislation in the field of health care has changed the approaches, principles and methods of providing medical services and serving citizens, as well as financing medical services. Regulatory changes made it possible to strengthen the autonomy of health care institutions and introduce an electronic healthcare system eHealth, for transparency of funding, e-document management, and the creation of e-services in the medical industry. At the same time, the problematic issues of public management in the field of health care remain ineffective state distribution of funding for medical services, insufficient resource provision of educational institutions for the training of medical personnel, low level of intersectoral interaction (communication and cooperation) between state institutions in this area.



KEYWORDS

public management, institutional and legal mechanisms of public management, personnel development, healthcare, digitalization, eHealth, medical services, regulatory support, quality, health care institutions, European integration, globalization, human resources.



Інституційно-правові механізми публічного управління якістю надання медичних послуг та розвитком персоналу в сфері охорони здоров'я України в контексті євроінтеграції

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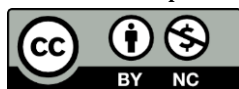
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Для забезпечення якості медичних послуг та розвитку персоналу важливо створити ефективні та результативні інституційно-правові механізми публічного управління у цій сфері. Євроінтеграція стала чинником пришвидшення трансформації державних інституцій та зміни нормативно-правового забезпечення в галузі охорони здоров'я в Україні. Мета статті полягала у дослідженні інституційно-правових механізмів публічного управління якістю надання медичних послуг та розвитку персоналу в сфері охорони здоров'я України з урахуванням євроінтеграційних процесів. Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на правовому аналізі діючого законодавства у сфері охорони здоров'я в Україні, статистичному аналізі наявного кадрового потенціалу. Результати демонструють прогрес у розвитку інституційних механізмів публічного управління в сфері охорони здоров'я за напрямками стратегія та політика управління, фінансування медичних послуг, гарантування якості медичних послуг та розвиток кадрових ресурсів. Трансформаційні зміни в діяльності державних інституцій в медичній сфері позитивно вплинули на доступність, якість медичних послуг, дотримання стандартів при наданні послуг, підвищення рівня відповідальності медичних закладів за результати надання послуг. Реформування інституцій публічного управління позначилося на розвитку професійного медичного персоналу в умовах конкуренції за пацієнтів. Прийняття нового законодавства в сфері охорони здоров'я змінило підходи, принципи та способи надання медичних послуг й обслуговування громадян, фінансування медичних послуг. Нормативно-правові зміни дозволили посилити автономність закладів охорони здоров'я та запровадити електронну систему охорони здоров'я eHealth для прозорості фінансування, е-документообігу, створення е-сервісів в медичній галузі. При цьому, проблемними питаннями публічного управління в сфері охорони здоров'я залишаються неефективний державний розподіл фінансування медичних послуг, не достатня ресурсна забезпеченість освітніх закладів із підготовки медичних кадрів, низький рівень міжсекторальної взаємодії (комунікації та співпраці) між державними інституціями в цій сфері.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

публічне управління, інституційно-правові механізми публічного управління, розвиток персоналу, охорона здоров'я, сфера охорони здоров'я, цифровізація, eHealth, медичні послуги, нормативно-правове забезпечення, якість, заклади охорони здоров'я, євроінтеграція, глобалізація, кадровий потенціал.

1. Introduction

The European integration direction of the development of the Ukrainian health care system determined the institutional and legal fundamental changes in the provision of medical services that took place during 2015–2025. Institutional transformations provided for the creation of the National Center for Public Health of Ukraine in 2016 for the professional development of personnel [21], of the National Health Service of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the NHSU) to provide financial guarantees to the population in high-quality medical care under the program of medical guarantees [17]. A separate area of change envisaged the development of the electronic health care system eHealth (hereinafter referred to as the EHR) and digital services to promote transparency and openness in the field of healthcare. Regulatory changes were necessary to adapt Ukrainian legislation to the EU rules and regulations in the areas of registration and circulation of medicines, financing of medical services based on the patient-centered principle, and the functioning of the EHR.

The main goal of institutional and legal transformations was to improve the quality, safety, accessibility, and financial support of medical services and the processes of their provision in health care institutions based on the patient-centered principle. Increasing the level of productivity and labor efficiency of human resources has become one of the tasks within the framework of the transformations carried out.

In 2025, Ukraine adopted a new “Strategy for the Development of the Health Care System for the Period up to 2030” dated 17.01.2025 No. 34-r [4], which defines an action plan to solve problems with the availability of medical services in wartime, the critical burden on medical institutions and personnel, the effective allocation of resources to the needs of the health care system, the migration of medical personnel, and others. This requires a more detailed coverage of institutional and legal mechanisms public management of the quality of medical services and the development of personnel in the field of health care in Ukraine in the context of European integration and Ukraine’s accession to the EU.

2. Literature Review

The analysis of scientific publications shows the importance of reforming the institutions that regulate the health care sector for the provision of high-quality, safe, affordable medical services. As stated in the article by F. A. Fernandes et al. [11], in national strategies for the development of health care, the priority goals are the quality, safety, accessibility, efficiency of the system of medical services, as well as the improvement of the system of medical information. Crisis periods of society development (coronavirus, war in Ukraine) also point to the importance of timely improvements in public management in the medical sector. The development and strengthening of institutions and the updating of legislation are crucial for the introduction of new approaches to public management in this area.

The article by N. Hoi et al. [13] analyzes approaches to public management in the field of health care in Ukraine in the context of European integration and digitalization. In Ukraine, the medical system is built on the basis of a multi-level institutional structure, which includes central executive authorities, territorial administrations and independent state institutions. electronic services. At the same time, in the context of European integration, territorial communities and local self-government play an important role in public management of the healthcare sector [26]. According to the conclusions of N. Veresniuk [22], in the context of military challenges, the development of legislation and new approaches to financing health care in Ukraine, European integration only accelerates positive changes in this area. However, accession to the EU does not solve the existing problems in the medical sector, and the EU does not have significant powers in the Ukrainian healthcare sector. Before joining the EU, it is necessary to introduce European principles and standards in medicine and the provision of services. In particular, the article by D. Lavrentii [14] summarizes the EU’s key approaches in the field of healthcare, which are based on equal access, humanism and an integrated approach to the provision of medical services. According to the position A. de Ruijter et al. [6], a governance system and legal norms are being formed in the EU, which aim to build public trust and ensure solidarity in the field of health. The latter principle provides for strengthening the institutions and solidarity mechanisms of European and national health systems to increase resilience and stability after the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

As noted by Y. Dzhygyr et al. [9], the war has led to an increase in the criticality of reforming health care management in the context of growing demand for medical services and a shortage of budgetary

resources. The publication of E. Dale et al. [5] highlights new challenges, such as improving access to the Medical Guarantee Program among internally displaced persons, dependence of medical institutions on the financial resources of local authorities, and changing the profile of patients. A separate area of research highlights the problems of the development of human resources in the health care industry. In the publications of I. Boryshkevych et al. [1] systematized the components of the managerial potential of the heads of medical institutions and systematized the factors influencing its development.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of the article was to study the institutional and legal mechanisms of public management of the quality of medical services and the development of personnel in the field of health care in Ukraine, taking into account European integration processes. To characterize the institutional and legal mechanisms of public management of the quality of medical services in Ukraine and the development of personnel in the field of health care in Ukraine in the context of Ukraine's accession to the EU, the following objects of research have been identified:

- to determine the current state of Ukraine's European integration processes in the field of healthcare;

- to analyze the institutional and legal mechanisms of public management of the quality of medical services and the development of human resources;

- to assess the impact of the existing institutional and legal mechanisms on the quality of medical services in Ukraine and the level of development of medical personnel.

4. Methods and Materials

The methodology of the study is based on the legal analysis of the current legislation in the field of health care in Ukraine, and statistical analysis of the available human resources. The legal analysis is carried out according to the principles of objectivity, hierarchy, time correspondence, and relevance. Statistical analysis of human resources in the field of health care was carried out on the basis of data from the Center for Public Health of Ukraine in 2021–2024 [19].

5. Results and Discussion

In 2015, fundamental changes in the health care system began in Ukraine, which consisted of the introduction of new approaches to financing the range of medical services. The introduced package of reforms in the direction of health care financing is based on the principles of universal health insurance (UHC) [12]. The adoption of the new Law of Ukraine "On State Financial Guarantees of Medical Services" dated October 19, 2017, No. 2168 [23] and related by-laws made it possible to introduce a single package of medical payments from the NHSU to medical institutions – the Medical Guarantee Program (MMG) to ensure equal access to medical services. The SGP came into force on April 1, 2020, within the framework of the emergency, primary, specialized (secondary), and palliative medical care provided by the relevant health care institutions, and other types of medical care. The NHSU, on the basis of agreements with medical institutions, pays for the provided medical services and medicines at uniform rates for citizens of Ukraine, foreigners, stateless persons and refugees. Medical payments are not related to citizens' contributions, and the PMG guarantees a single set of payments for all persons who are financed centrally at the expense of the state budget. In 2020-2022, the volume of SGP financing in Ukraine increased, amounting to UAH 89.53 billion in 2020, UAH 123.90 billion in 2021, and UAH 146.30 billion in 2022. In 2023, the volume of payments to medical institutions amounted to UAH 139.43 billion, increasing to UAH 157.35 billion in 2024 and decreasing to UAH 139.04 billion in 2025. At the same time, the share of expenditures of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine within the framework of SGP financing only increased in 2020–2025 (Fig. 1).

The institutional mechanism of public management of the quality of medical services in Ukraine covers a set of management entities that are created and operate at the national and local management levels to regulate the activities of medical institutions in order to ensure accessibility, quality, and inclusiveness of medical services for different categories of the population.

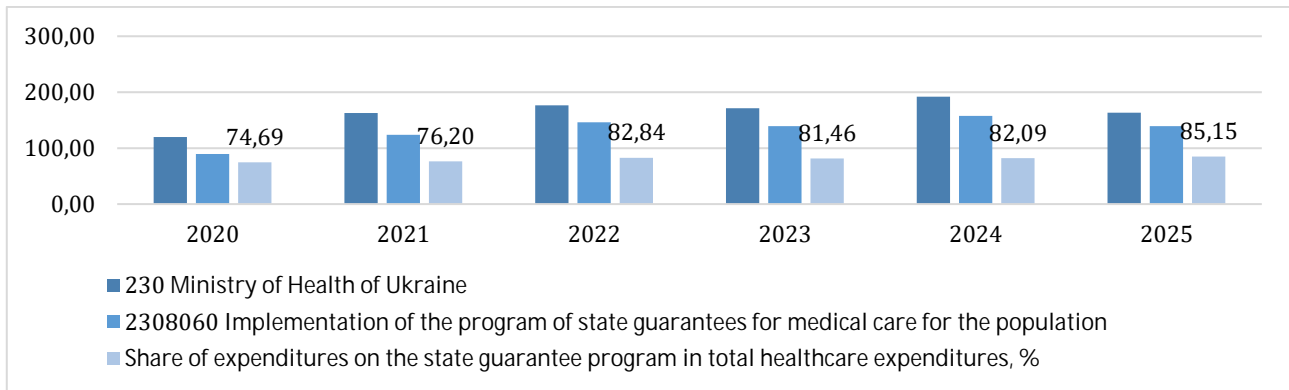


Figure 1. Trends in Budget Funding for State-Guaranteed Healthcare Programs for the Population of Ukraine

Source: Calculated by authors based on [18].

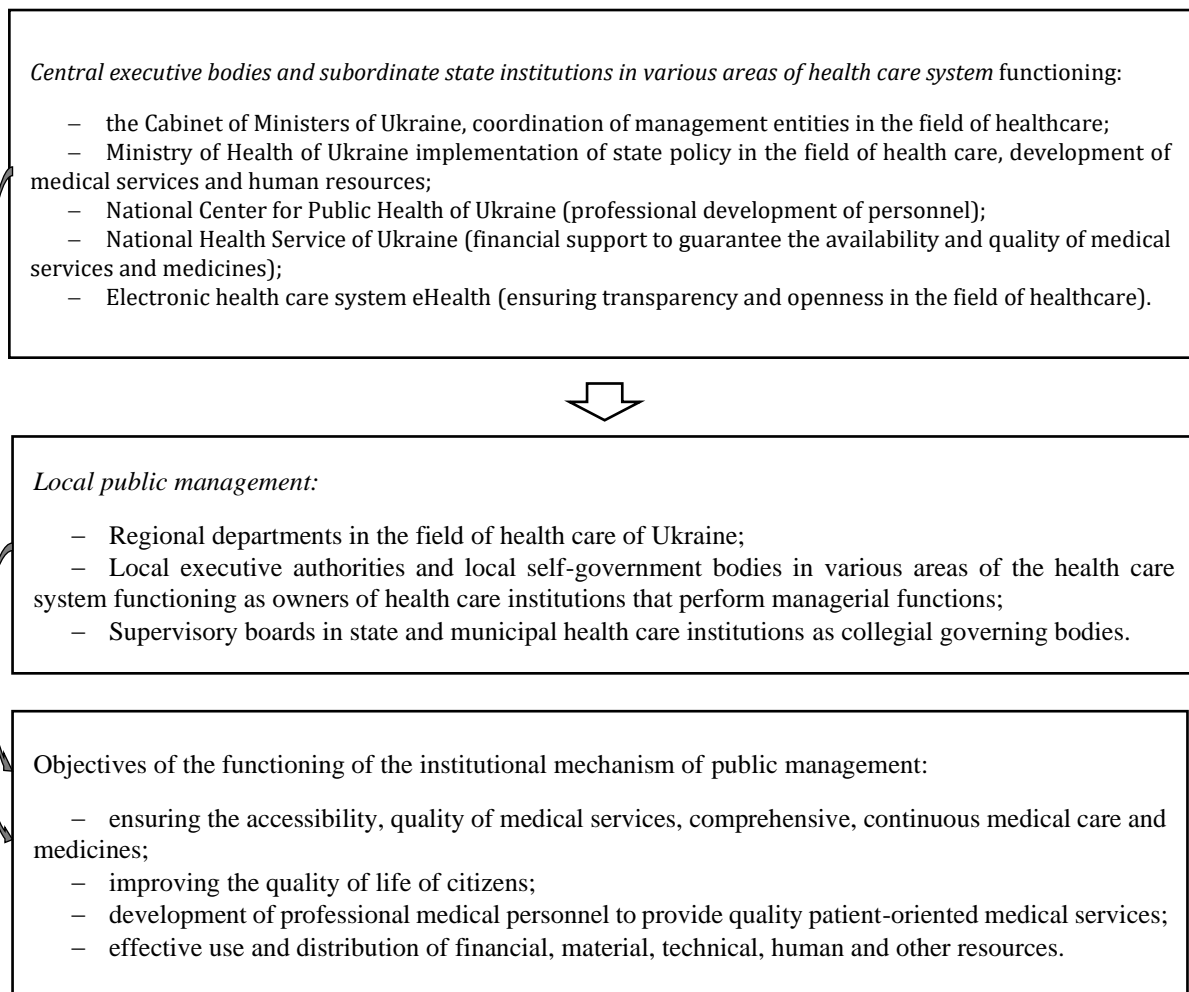


Figure 2. Institutional mechanisms of public management of the quality of medical services in Ukraine

Source: Developed by the authors.

As a result of the reform of the health care system, the problems of insufficiently effective state management of medical institutions, including at the local level, have been solved. Local self-government bodies and subjects of the subnational level of management are entrusted with the authority to perform managerial functions by communal health care institutions, organize their material, technical, and financial support, medical care, ensure its free of charge, accessibility, etc. Local authorities are responsible for the development of a capable network of health care institutions (hospital districts), the creation of which took place within each region to ensure the provision of comprehensive, affordable medical services within the entire system of medical care. Local authorities

have gained leverage for the effective reorganization of the hospital network, the material and technical development of medical institutions, staff training, and the introduction of local development programs.

The establishment of the state institution “Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine” (PHC) was an EU requirement for Ukraine and provided for the reform of the system of sanitary and preventive surveillance to meet the needs of citizens in protection from infectious and non-communicable diseases, in biological safety and high-quality laboratory diagnostics of infectious diseases, immunoprophylaxis [21].

With the support of the World Health Organization, the Platform of the Center for Public Health was modernized and expanded as a way to improve skills and professional competencies in the field of public health. Online courses from leading international and Ukrainian experts on the most relevant topics are available on the platform (HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, tuberculosis, substitution maintenance therapy, prevention of noncommunicable and communicable diseases), training and reference materials, practical instructions, catalog of activities for continuous professional development [21].

In 2019–2025, a EUR 5.8 million EU funding project “Support to Ukraine in the Development of a Modern Health Care System” was implemented to modernize Ukraine’s health system and align it with EU standards and requirements. centralization of a coordinated blood transfusion system for sustainable management in this field of medicine, improving patient safety by creating a national registry of blood donors, creating an appointment scheduling system and a comprehensive blood management information system “eKrov” [7; 10]. The information and communication system of blood donation was created for centralized management of information about donors, operational accounting of stocks, effective planning of supplies between medical institutions, and operational accounting of stocks to ensure high-quality and equal access of the population to relevant services [10].

With the support of the EU project, the capabilities of the State Institution “Center of the Public Ministry of Health of Ukraine” were consolidated and expanded by equipping and developing infrastructure for scientific, technological and epidemiological developments. Expert consultations of leading EU experts contributed to improving management and strategic planning in critical areas of public health in order to increase the level of resilience of Ukrainian medicine [10].

As part of the project, legal and regulatory reforms were carried out in Ukraine in the field of healthcare. In particular, regulations were developed to harmonize Ukrainian legislation with EU norms and requirements. New laws and by-laws were aimed at improving epidemiological surveillance of diseases, epidemiological response and coordination of public health. provisions in the field of health care [7].

To ensure the sustainable development of the medical sector in Ukraine and the sustainability of reforms, the EU project made significant investments in human capital development. More than 1500 medical workers underwent specialized training programs and seminars for the development of knowledge and skills. The training model of trainers introduced within the framework of the project helped to institutionalize the mechanism of knowledge transfer, which had a positive impact on the further educational process and the development of medical capacity after graduation from the project [7].

The project had a positive impact on the digitalization of the healthcare sector and its preparedness for emergency crises, as innovative tools were introduced to ensure the continuity of medical care in crisis conditions. In the process of implementing the project, the system of medical information on emergencies at the level of primary health care was modernized, which became a determining factor in building a more resilient healthcare infrastructure in Ukraine [7].

Raising public awareness and involving communities have become one of the most important elements of the project’s success. For this purpose, a nationwide communication campaign was carried out to promote voluntary blood donation, which reached more than two million potential donors. Within the framework of the online platform, which contains information about displaced persons, more than 22 thousand visitors were served in the period from June 2022 to November 2023 to promote critical support during the period of instability in Ukraine [7].

The signing of the Agreement between Ukraine and the EU on its participation in the EU4Health program in Lviv in July 2022 was another stage on the way to European integration in the medical field. The Agreement was ratified in January 2023 and allowed Ukraine to receive financial resources for the development of healthcare in accordance with EU standards. which contributed to the integration of medical personnel into the European medical space [20].

The legal mechanism of public management of the quality of medical services in Ukraine will be defined as a set of normative legal acts that determine the legal, organizational principles for the provision of medical care and the provision of medical care to the population in health care institutions in accordance with the existing standards for the provision of medical services.

According to the "Procedure for Quality Control of Medical Care" dated September 28, 2012, No. 752, "quality of medical care" is defined as "the provision of medical care and other measures to organize the provision of medical care by health care institutions in accordance with standards in the field of health care" [15]. That is, in Ukraine, high-quality medical services must be provided in accordance with approved standards. To assess the quality of medical care in Ukraine, external and internal quality control, expert assessment, self-assessment by medical workers, clinical audit, certification and certification in accordance with European and Ukrainian requirements, monitoring of the system of indicators of the quality of medical services are carried out.

The management of state and municipal health care institutions or medical councils is responsible for internal control of the quality of medical services by monitoring the qualifications of doctors, professionals and junior specialists with medical education. State executive authorities are responsible for external control of the quality of medical services using methods of monitoring compliance with licensing requirements, certification, and clinical and expert assessment [15].

Quality control of the provision of medical services is carried out according to the components, namely: process, structure, results of medical care; control over the implementation of managerial decisions; organization of assistance; compliance with the qualification requirements of medical personnel, including managers; study of patients' opinions on the provision of medical services; ensuring the safety and rights of patients.

In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the "Strategy for the Development of Medical Education in Ukraine" dated 27.02.2019 No. 95-r [2], which aims to solve the problems of training and professional development of employees in this area: the lack of a methodology for assessing the needs in the training of medical personnel, which would take into account the needs of the state; the distribution of state funding for the training of medical personnel; low level of state funding of medical institutions of higher education; the decrease in the prestige of the medical profession and motives for employment; the need to update the requirements for the competencies of doctors; separation of medical education and science, practical activity; unregulated interaction between higher education institutions and medical institutions, and others [2]. Under martial law in Ukraine, there is a problem of reducing the number of doctors and nurses; the share of doctors of retirement age has increased, which will negatively affect the human resources in the future (Table 1).

Table 1. Dynamics of the number of medical personnel in Ukraine in 2021-2024, persons

Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Absolute deviation (2024-2021), persons/%
The number of doctors (without dentists), including physicists. persons (total number of persons as of 31.12), persons	143887.0	137549.0	133237.0	127675.0	-16212.0
mid-level medical staff	261255.0	241147.0	229368.0	215470.0	-45785.0
Percentage of mid-level medical staff, %	64.5	63.7	63.3	62.8	-1.7
Of the total number of doctors of retirement age	34061.0	32610.0	32917.0	32316.0	-1745.0
Share of doctors - persons of retirement age, %	23.7	23.7	24.7	25.3	+1.6

Source: Calculated by the authors based on data [19].

To ensure the quality of medical services, the Resolution "On Approval of the Regulation on the System of Continuous Professional Development of Medical and Pharmaceutical Workers" dated July 14, 2021, No. 725, which entered into force on January 1, 2022, was adopted. The document defines the concept of measures for the continuous professional development of medical personnel, the requirements for such events and providers of events, the forms of participation of medical personnel in events, electronic system of event accounting [3].

In 2025, new legislative requirements for the certification of employees in the field of health care were introduced [16]. The Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine "On Approval of the Procedure for Certification of Health Care Workers and Amendments to Certain Orders of the Ministry of Health of

Ukraine” provides for certification after the termination or cancellation of martial law, introduces a new model of attestation according to a single nomenclature of specialties and a common procedure for attestation of all employees, introduces a new document Certificate of Assignment/Confirmation of Professional Qualification with a validity period throughout professional activity. Certification should take place within the medical institution that issues the certificate, and takes into account complaints against the employee by the decision of the certification commission of the medical institution.

The report of the World Health Organization notes that in 2017, Ukraine implemented reforms in the management of financial support of the health care system to improve access to medical services for the population and reduce the financial burden on patients when paying for services [25]. At the same time, the 2023 report of the World Health Organization highlights the challenges that have arisen in the context of a full-scale invasion, emphasizing the importance of developing strong institutions, transparency and accountability in governance [24]. The report reveals the limited and insufficient funding of secondary and specialized medical care in Ukraine through the established mechanism for concluding contracts between medical institutions and the National Health Service of Ukraine within the framework of the Medical Guarantee Program (PMG) [24].

6. Conclusions

The development of state institutions in the field of health care and institutional mechanisms of public management has had a positive impact on the implementation of the strategy and state policy in this area, as the volume of financing of medical services at the expense of the state budget has increased significantly. Reforms in the field of health care over the past 2015-2025 were aimed at improving access and quality of medical services, developing human resources by overcoming existing problems in the training of medical personnel, their certification and professional development. Transformational changes in the activities of state institutions in the medical field have had a positive impact on the accessibility, quality of medical services, compliance with standards in the provision of services, increasing the level of responsibility of medical institutions for the results of service provision. The adoption of new legislation in the field of health care has changed the approaches, principles and methods of providing medical services and serving citizens, financing medical services. Regulatory changes made it possible to strengthen the autonomy of health care institutions and introduce an electronic health care system eHealth, for transparency of funding, e-document management, and the creation of e-services in the medical industry. At the same time, the problematic issues of public management in the field of health care remain ineffective state distribution of funding for medical services, insufficient resource provision of educational institutions for the training of medical personnel, low level of intersectoral interaction (communication and cooperation) between state institutions in this area.

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