

**Advances in Reforming Universal Health Insurance:  
Lessons from South Korea**

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## <ABSTRACT>

This paper is an updated, follow-up version of our previous work by accommodating time series analysis. We investigated the trends in health care finance that was recently affected by three, i.e., *integration, separation, and financial* reforms. Using the OECD Health Data 2008, we compared the performance outcomes of OECD countries longitudinally. We found that total expenditures on health relative to the gross domestic product (THE/GDP) rose over the whole years (1980-2006), particularly having increased sharply after the three health care reforms in 2000. The time series analysis revealed that statistically significant increasing trends in the ratios of THE/GDP, GS/THE, SSS/THE, PHE/THE, and PI/THE at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage change of the OOP/THE was on the way of decreasing trend at 1% level of significance. Based on the results, we conclude that the public coverage of our health system has improved over the time with rising portions of government and social security financing out of the total health expenditures. The coverage from the private insurance (PI/THE) has risen as well over the whole 26 years with statistical significance and then dropped slightly in the post-reform period (2001-2006). As expected, the social security financing (SSS/THE) increased in the 1990s as a result of the full implementation of universal health insurance in 1990.

KEY WORDS: Health Care Finance, Health Reform, OECD Country