



THE EVOLUTION OF THE HEALTHCARE BUDGETS IN THE COMMUNITY OF MADRID

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Abstract: This study analyzes the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid from 2008 to 2023, with the aim of understanding the trends, changes and effects on the supply of healthcare services. Through an exhaustive review of the existing information, consulting official sources and relevant studies, historical data on the healthcare budgets were collected. Results show that, despite the variability in budget allocation through the period analyzed, there is a clear trend to maintain and strengthen investment in healthcare services in Community of Madrid.

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1.- INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the healthcare system in Spain has undergone significant transformations to adapt to demographic changes, the demands of the population and medical and technological advances. One of the fundamental aspects in the functioning and development of any healthcare system is the allocation of economic resources, and in this context, healthcare budgets play a crucial role. In this Final Degree Project, I will carry out an exhaustive analysis on the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid from 2008 to 2023, in order to understand the trends, changes and implications on the supply of healthcare services.

The motivation for carrying out this study lies in the importance of understanding how economic resources have been distributed in the area of healthcare in the Community of Madrid over the years, and how this has affected the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for the citizens of Madrid. Healthcare is a fundamental pillar of social welfare, and its adequate financing is essential to guarantee quality medical care and the fulfillment of fundamental health rights.

The main objective of this work is to analyze the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid, identifying variations in the allocation of resources over time, as well as the factors that have influenced these decisions. In addition, we seek to evaluate the impact of budgets on the responses of the healthcare system to emerging challenges, such as the aging of the population and the growing demand for medical services.

From this analysis, we expect to obtain a general overview of the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid and to detect potential patterns or trends over time. In addition, the main challenges and opportunities that have influenced the allocation of resources will be identified, such as economic crises, political and social changes, and health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the main findings of this study is the variability in budget allocation throughout the period analyzed. During the first years after the financial crisis of 2008, significant cuts were observed in the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid, which had a negative impact on the quality and accessibility of healthcare services. This situation reflected the economic challenges and the need for adjustments in resource management.

However, as of 2015, a change in trend was evident with a gradual increase in the allocation of resources to healthcare. This increase was driven by the recognition of the importance of healthcare and the need to strengthen the healthcare system in the region. Measures and programs were implemented to improve healthcare infrastructure, expand healthcare capacity and promote prevention.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, had a significant impact on the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid. Additional emergency resources were allocated to address the health crisis, reflecting the importance of flexible and contingency budgets. These resources were used to strengthen hospital infrastructure, increase care capacity, purchase protective equipment, and promote research and development of vaccines and treatments.

In addition, the budget extension that took place from 2019 to 2021, also implied the lack of allocation of funds for the development and implementation of new policies and programs in the area of healthcare. The continuity of the previous budgets limited the possibility of implementing innovative measures adapted to the changing needs of the population, until the subsequent approval of the 2022 healthcare budgets where expenses were restructured according to the needs of the citizens of Madrid.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 shows how the healthcare system is structured from a legal point of view. Section 3 describes how the healthcare system and its budgets are structured in the Community of Madrid. The empirical analysis on the description of the healthcare budgets is detailed in section 4. Finally, section 5 summarises the main conclusions.

2.- HEALTHCARE WITHIN THE SPANISH WELFARE STATE

Healthcare is one of the fundamental pillars of the Spanish welfare state. The welfare state in Spain has been characterized by a universal and free public healthcare system, financed through taxes. This system, known as the National Health System (SNS for its Spanish acronym of *Sistema Nacional de Salud*), was created in 1986 and is responsible for guaranteeing the right to health protection for all Spanish citizens. (V. Navarro n/d)

The SNS consists of a network of primary care services, hospitals and specialty centers that offer healthcare services to all citizens regardless of their economic or social situation. In addition, health care is also offered to foreigners who are in Spain in a legal situation.

The healthcare system in Spain has undergone several reforms over the years to improve its efficiency and quality. Despite this, it still faces some challenges, such as the aging of the population and the growing demand for healthcare services. (V. Navarro n/d)

In recent years, there has also been some controversy over the management of healthcare in Spain, especially with regard to public-private collaboration and the lack of resources in some hospitals and healthcare centers. In general, the welfare state in Spain has allowed citizens to have access to quality healthcare and is valued positively by the majority of the population.

However, despite the achievements of the Spanish public healthcare system, there are also some challenges and problems. For example, there are waiting lists for some medical procedures and some healthcare services are underfunded. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the capacity of the Spanish healthcare system to respond to a health emergency.

At the legal level, the right to health is constitutionally protected. Article 43 of the Spanish Constitution establishes the right to health protection, recognizing the competence of the public authorities to organize and protect public health through preventive measures and the provision of necessary services. This article establishes the obligation of the State to guarantee the right to health protection for all citizens, as well as the obligation to encourage health education and the promotion of public health (art. 43 CE).

On the other hand, article 148 of the Spanish Constitution establishes the powers that can be transferred to the Autonomous Communities, i.e., this article recognizes the exclusive competence of the State in basic legislation on health, without prejudice to the powers of the Autonomous Communities in the management of healthcare services (art. 148 CE). On a practical level, it can be seen that the management of healthcare services is carried out at the autonomous community level in the 17 communities that make up the Spanish State.

The National Health System as we know it today was fundamentally articulated through Law 14/1986, of April 25, 1986, General Health Law (its Spanish equivalent is *Ley General Sanitaria*). The General Health Law is a Spanish law passed in 1986 that establishes the legal framework for the organization, management and financing of the public healthcare system in Spain. This law recognizes the right to health protection as a fundamental right of all citizens and establishes the basis for guaranteeing free public health care to all citizens, regardless of their origin or social status.

Among the objectives of the General Health Law are the promotion of health and disease prevention, the promotion of the quality of healthcare services, the guarantee of equity and accessibility to healthcare services, coordination between the different levels of care and the participation of society in the planning and management of healthcare services.

The General Health Law also establishes the legal framework for the organization of the healthcare system in Spain, which is based on decentralization and the transfer of healthcare competencies to the autonomous communities. Each autonomous community is responsible for the organization and management of its own healthcare system, within the framework established by the General Health Law.

Healthcare budgets are also closely related to the General Health Law. This law establishes that the management of the public healthcare system corresponds to the autonomous communities, so each of them must have its own healthcare budget to finance and manage public healthcare services. The General Health Law establishes that healthcare budgets must guarantee the necessary financing to provide adequate health care to the population, so that the necessary services and benefits can be offered to protect and improve people's health. In addition, healthcare resources must be distributed equitably, so as to guarantee access to healthcare services to the entire population, regardless of their place of residence or economic capacity.

This general legislative framework is related to other regulations at the regional level. In the Community of Madrid (where we focus this work), healthcare budgets are also related to other laws and regulations that regulate the functioning of the public healthcare system, such as the Madrid Health Law (its Spanish equivalent is *Ordenación Sanitaria de la Comunidad de Madrid*), which establishes the fundamentals for the organization, planning and management of public healthcare services in the Community of Madrid. On the other hand, it is also coordinated at the national level with the General State Budget Law (its Spanish equivalent is *Presupuestos Generales del Estado*), which establishes the general framework for the preparation of budgets for all public areas and services, including healthcare. In general, all these laws and regulations seek to ensure that the resources allocated to public health are sufficient, efficient and effective to guarantee the health of the population.

3.- STRUCTURE OF THE HEALTHCARE BUDGET IN THE COMMUNITY OF MADRID

HOW IS THE HEALTHCARE BUDGET DISTRIBUTED IN THE COMMUNITY OF MADRID?

Within the General Budget Law of the Community of Madrid, we can observe that the budgetary expenditure dedicated to the healthcare chapter is distributed in two Budget Centers:

- **Center 1001, "Administration of the Community of Madrid"**, which groups the allocations corresponding to the functions of inter-administrative coordination of all the bodies and the Institutional Administration of the Regional Ministry; organization and inspection; vaccine contracting; health research; planning and coordination of drug addiction prevention resources and social and healthcare coordination.
- **Center 1017 "Servicio Madrileño de Salud"**, which groups the allocations corresponding to the activities to be developed by the Governmental Entity "Servicio Madrileño de Salud", in relation to the adequate organization and management of the actions that are the responsibility of the Healthcare Administration of the Community of Madrid.

This second budget center, which is the focus of study in this paper, is divided into the following spending programs, which are mentioned below:

- 311P "Management and General Services of the Madrid Healthcare Service",
- 312A "Hospital Care",
- 312B "Primary Care".
- 312C "Integral Waiting List Plan",
- 312F "Health Personnel Training".
- 313C "SUMMA 112".

The distribution of the healthcare budget in the Community of Madrid varies from year to year, but in general terms, most of the budget has traditionally been allocated to hospital care and primary care. In the 2021 budget, for example, hospital care has received the largest percentage of the healthcare budget, with a total of €3736 million, followed by primary care, which has received a budget of €1542 million. In addition, resources have been allocated to other areas of healthcare, such as public health, health research and dependency care.

The Community of Madrid is also divided into several Health Areas, each of which has a different budget distribution according to its needs. Below are some of the Health Areas of Madrid and their budget distribution in the year 2022:

- **Madrid Health Area:** This area is the largest in Madrid and has a population of more than 6 million inhabitants. In 2022, its budget was around €3 billion.
- **Móstoles Health Area:** This area is located in the southwest of Madrid and has a population of around 200,000 inhabitants. In 2022, its budget was around 185 million euros.
- **Alcorcón Health Area:** This area is located in the southwest of Madrid and has a population of around 170,000 inhabitants. In 2022, its budget was around €179 million.
- **Getafe Health Area:** This area is located in the south of Madrid and has a population of around 180,000 inhabitants. In 2022, its budget was around €205 million.
- **Leganés Health Area:** This area is located in the south of Madrid and has a population of around 186,000 people. In 2022, its budget was around €163 million.

As can be seen, the healthcare budget of the Community of Madrid is distributed equitably (based on population) among all areas and districts, as it seeks to guarantee access to medical care for the entire population, regardless of their geographic location. However, there may be some variations in the budget

allocation according to the specific needs of each zone. For example, in recent years additional resources have been allocated to hospitals located in the most affected areas by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as *Hospital Universitario La Paz* or *Hospital Universitario Gregorio Marañón*. Investments have also been made in the improvement of healthcare infrastructure in some districts of Madrid with a higher demand for healthcare services, such as the district of *Carabanchel* (Law 4/2021).

In this paper we will focus on the spending programs where most of the budget has been allocated during the years analyzed in this paper: hospital care and primary care. Next, we will discuss what they are about and the services included.

WHAT IS HOSPITAL CARE?

Hospital care refers to health care provided in a hospital or specialized health care facilities, where care is provided to patients requiring intensive medical care or more complex surgical interventions. Hospital care includes specialized care by healthcare professionals, such as physicians, nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, among others.

At the hospital, patients receive more intensive and specialized care, often in the context of a more serious or complex illness or injury that requires more advanced and continuous treatment than in primary care. Hospitals also have a wide range of resources, such as advanced medical and technological equipment, to provide care for patients with special needs.

Hospital care may include services such as surgery, intensive care, treatment of chronic and critical illnesses, chemotherapy and radiation therapy treatments, emergency and urgent care, rehabilitation and other specialized services.

Hospital care is often more expensive than primary care because of the complexity and specialization of the services provided, and is often reserved for patients who require more intensive or advanced care. However, hospital care is essential for the treatment of serious illnesses and injuries and for the maintenance of patients' health.

WHAT IS PRIMARY CARE?

Primary care is the first instance of health care that a person receives when they have a health problem, whether it is an illness, an injury or a mental health disorder. It is a basic and fundamental level of care in the health system that aims to provide comprehensive, continuous and personalized care to patients, promoting disease prevention and health promotion.

Primary care is carried out by health professionals, such as physicians, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, social workers and psychologists, among others, who work in multidisciplinary teams in healthcare centers, clinics and other health services close to the community.

The functions of primary care include diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of diseases, disease prevention, health promotion and education, attention to mental health problems, care of chronic patients and coordination with other levels of care in the health system.

Primary care is essential in any health system as it allows patients to have easy and quick access to health services, promoting early detection of diseases and prevention of complications. In addition, primary care is a key element in promoting health and reducing health inequalities. (WHO, 2021).

4.- EVOLUTION OF THE HEALTH BUDGETS OF THE COMMUNITY OF MADRID

This section shows a descriptive analysis of the evolution of the healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid between 2008 and 2023. For this purpose, I extracted the most relevant data to be analyzed from each General Budget Law of the Community of Madrid. The methodology for extracting the data consists in identifying the chapter budgeted for Health within each General Budget Law of the Community of Madrid. Once this chapter has been identified, I extracted the budget items to be analyzed, mostly focused on primary care and hospital care.

With all this information, I created a database by unifying the information collected in the different General Budget Laws of the Community of Madrid from 2008 to 2023 to show the temporal evolution in absolute value (in euros) of the different items, as well as the relative weight of each item within the Healthcare budget.

This section is divided in four subsections. First, I show a general overview on the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid. Second, I detail the most relevant features related to each annual budget from 2008 to 2019. Third, I link the healthcare budgets with the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, I describe the latest healthcare budgets for 2022 and 2023.

GENERAL EVOLUTION

The evolution of the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid from 2008 to 2023 has been marked by a series of factors that have influenced both their increases and decreases. I show below in figure 1 a preliminary analysis of the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid during the period mentioned above.

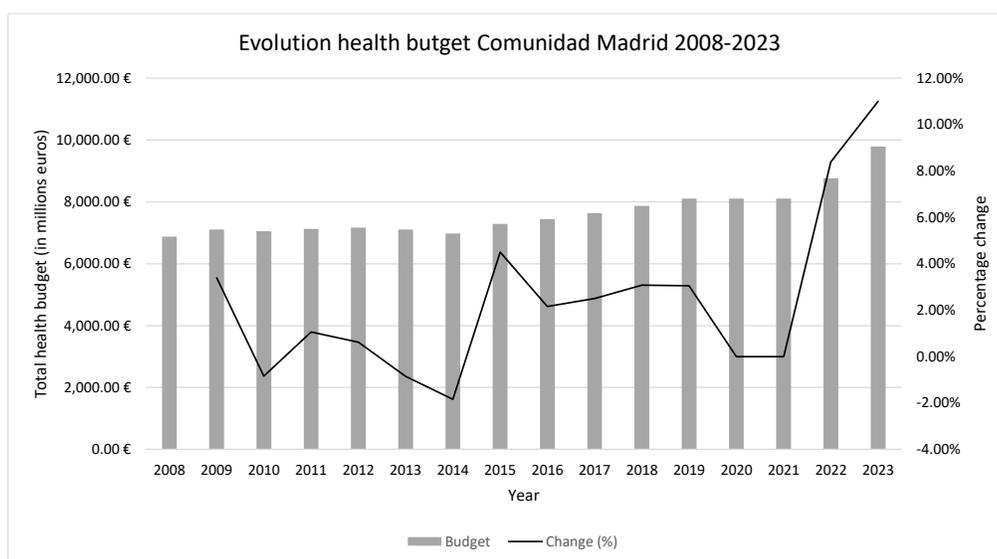


Figure 1: Evolution healthcare budget Comunidad Madrid 2008-2023. This figure represents in the left vertical axis (in gray columns) the total budget in health (expressed in millions of euros) in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023. The vertical right axis (in black line) represents the annual percentage change in the health budget in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023.

In 2008, the health budget of the Community of Madrid amounted to 6877 million euros, which represented 36.23% of the total budget of the Autonomous Community. This increase was mainly allocated to investment in infrastructure and medical technology, as well as to the improvement of primary care. At that time, the Community of Madrid was the region with the largest healthcare budget in Spain.

In the following years, there was a steady increase in the healthcare budget in the Community of Madrid. In 2009, the healthcare budget stood at 7.11 billion euros, which represented an increase of 3.39% over the previous year. In 2010, the healthcare budget reached 7.05 billion euros, which represented a decrease of 0.84% with respect to the previous year. This reduction was partly attributable to austerity measures adopted by the central government in the context of the economic crisis.

However, back in 2011, an upward trend began in the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid. By then, the healthcare budget amounted to €7125 million, which represented a small increase of 1.06% over the previous year. This increase was mainly allocated to investment in health personnel and in the improvement of primary care. In 2012, the healthcare budget amounted to €7169 million, which represented another small increase of 0.62% over the previous year.

It was in the following years that the decrease in the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid became more pronounced. In 2013, the healthcare budget fell to €7108 million, which represented a decrease of 0.85% compared to the previous year, and in 2014 the healthcare budget fell to €6,977 million, which was 1.84% less than the previous year.

It was from 2015 on, where a gradual recovery of the healthcare budgets of the community of Madrid began, having a great impact in 2015, with a budget of 7,289 million euros, representing an increase of 4.5% compared to 2014. In the following years, the trend continued, with increases of 2.16% in 2016, 2.50% in 2017, 3.08% in 2018 and 3.04% in 2019.

Over the years 2020 and 2021, the healthcare budget of the Community of Madrid, has not experienced an evolution due to the extension of the 2019 budget. A noteworthy fact in these years has been that, although the budget was maintained, public healthcare spending did vary to adapt to the healthcare situation and for this reason spending was higher than budgeted. This increase was largely assigned for pandemic control, including the purchase of healthcare equipment, the hiring of healthcare personnel and the expansion of hospital infrastructures. In addition, resources were allocated to research and development of vaccines and treatments for COVID- 19.

In 2022, the healthcare budget of the Community of Madrid stands at 8764 million euros, representing a large increase of 8.39% over previous years, thus continuing the upward trend in healthcare budgets, indicating the importance given to healthcare in the region. Finally, in 2023, a historic investment has been made in healthcare budgets as more than 9792 million euros have been allocated, an

increase of more than 11% over 2022.

In short, the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid have undergone a significant evolution in recent years, whose fluctuations depending on political and economic changes, with a small decrease due to the crisis in 2008, but with a significant increase in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to invest in the improvement of health care.

ANNUAL BUDGETS (2008 - 2019)

After an initial global analysis of the evolution of the healthcare budget, this section details the most relevant aspects of each budget on an annual basis.

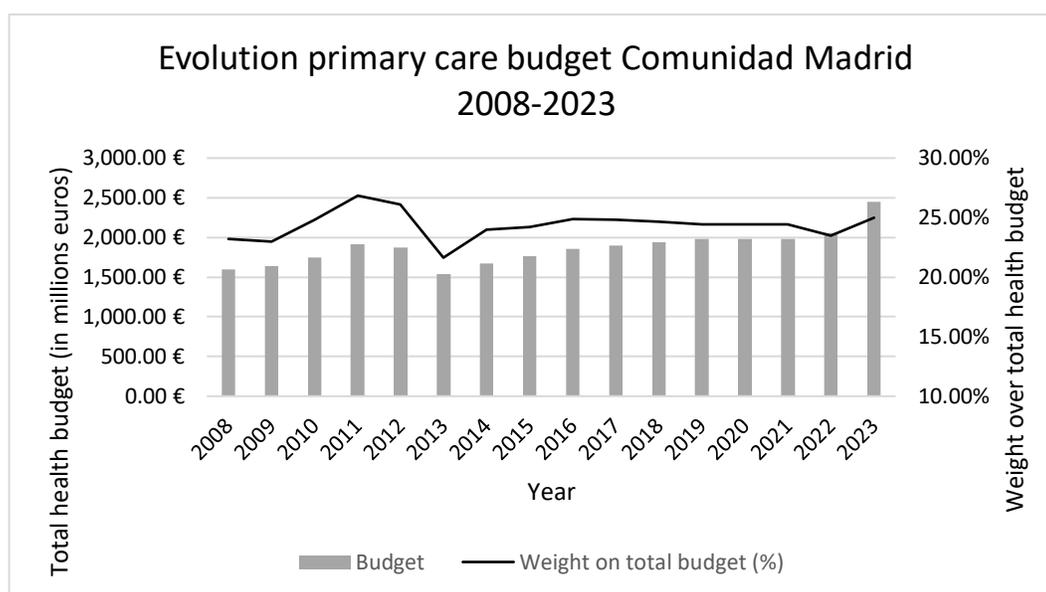


Figure 2: Evolution primary care budget Comunidad Madrid 2008-2023. This figure represents in the left vertical axis (in gray columns) the primary care budget (expressed in millions of euros) in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023. The vertical right axis (in black line) represents the weight of the primary care budget over the total healthcare budget in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023.

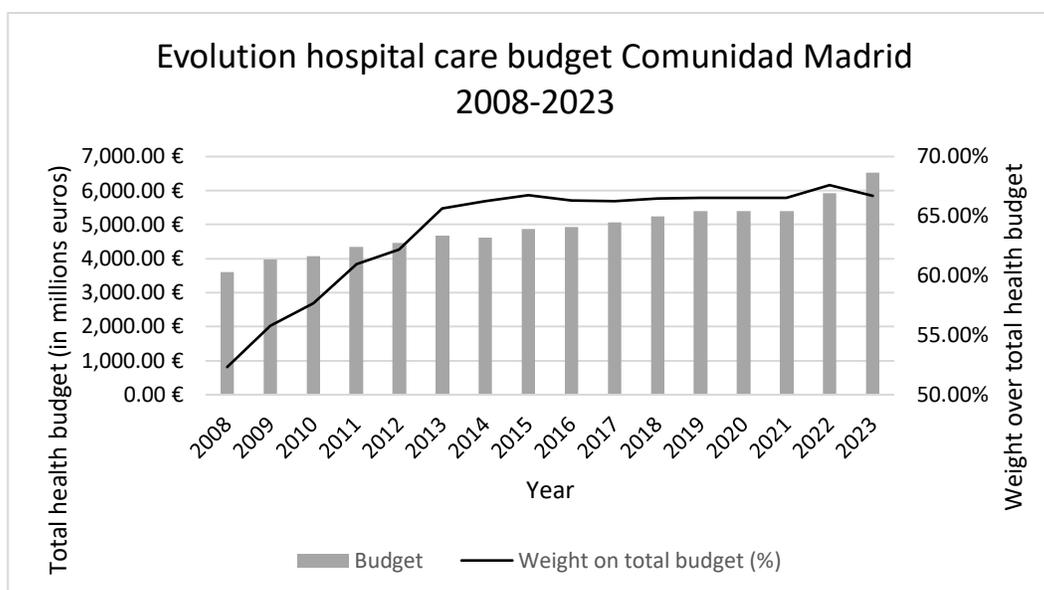


Figure 3: Evolution hospital care budget Comunidad Madrid 2008-2023. This figure represents in the left vertical axis (in gray columns) the hospital care budget (expressed in millions of euros) in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023. The vertical right axis (in black line) represents the weight of the hospital care budget over the total healthcare budget in the Comunidad Madrid from 2008 to 2023.

Year 2008

In 2008, the budget allocated to healthcare in the Community of Madrid was 6877 million euros, which represented more than 36% of the budget of the autonomous community. This amount represented an increase of 6.05% over the previous year's budget.

Most of the healthcare budget in 2008 went to hospital care, with a total of 2889 million euros, followed by primary care, with a budget of 1597 million euros. Resources were also allocated to public health (179 million euros), health research (33 million euros) and other programs (924 million euros). In addition, in relation to prescriptions, health material and the dispensing of pharmaceuticals, they totaled almost 2 billion euros. One measure they considered implementing was the rationalization of these products.

The commitments agreed upon this year were to implement "works and infrastructures" built during the last legislative session, such as the new hospitals, which will receive 319 million euros in funding. For the first time in 2008, a budget item was introduced for a possible vaccine against cervical cancer.

Year 2009

The budget allocated to healthcare in Madrid in 2009 was not affected by the global financial crisis of 2008, since, compared to the previous year, the budget allocated was 6877 million euros, while in 2009 it was 7110 million euros, 3.39% more than the previous year. 233 million more than in the previous year.

One of the first incentives that they tried to solve in 2009 was to limit the waiting time for surgery and diagnosis to a maximum of 30 working days, according to the Comprehensive Waiting List Plan. The community allocated 77.8 million euros that year to reduce the surgical and diagnostic waiting list.

According to the Ministry, in 2009 funds were assigned to support policies that "sustain the increase in the activity of the hospitals themselves and maintain the support that the subsidized centers have been giving for years". As a result, 15 million euros were allocated to shorten the diagnostic waiting list and 35 million euros to pay for scheduled surgery (El Médico Interactivo, 2011).

This year's more relevant facts were:

- Despite being in a period of such a deep crisis, these first years did not affect the budgets to any great extent, since, as mentioned above, there was an increase in the health budget item. Although, it is true, that essential healthcare services remained constant and primary and hospital care services continued to be provided to citizens.
- Increase in primary care spending. In 2009, more resources were allocated to primary care, due to the importance of primary care in the prevention and treatment of diseases, as well as the need to strengthen health care in the community. In this sense, resources were allocated for the hiring of additional health personnel, the improvement of facilities and the acquisition of medical equipment.
- On the other hand, there was a small reduction in hospital infrastructure spending compared to previous years, but despite this reduction, essential hospital care was maintained and medical services continued to be provided to patients.
- Spending on prevention and health promotion programs. These programs were aimed at preventing diseases and promoting healthy lifestyles in the community. Resources were allocated for the implementation of vaccination campaigns, early disease detection programs and health education campaigns.

Year 2010

The healthcare budget allocated in the Community of Madrid was 7050 million euros. This year the total budgets were indeed reduced after the world financial crisis of 2008, but not as much as expected, since it was only reduced by 0.84% with respect to 2009 (60 million less than in the previous year).

Some relevant aspects of the healthcare budgets were as follows:

- In 2010, Madrid's healthcare budget was reduced by 0.53% compared to the previous year's budget. This reduction was due to the need to adjust the budget in a context of economic crisis. Despite the budget reduction, essential healthcare services were maintained and primary and hospital care services continued to be provided to citizens.
- As in 2009, in 2010 more resources were allocated to primary care in Madrid, more specifically, around 2 billion euros. This was due to the importance of primary care in the prevention and treatment of disease, as well as the need to strengthen healthcare in the community. In this sense, resources were allocated for the recruitment of additional health personnel, the improvement of facilities and the acquisition of medical equipment.
- Despite the budget reduction, resources were allocated to hospital infrastructure in Madrid in 2010. This was due to the need to maintain and improve hospital facilities to ensure quality medical care for patients. In this regard, resources were allocated for the construction and renovation of hospitals, the acquisition of medical equipment and the improvement of facilities.
- A negative aspect, which at the time was a controversial issue, was the reduction of 1,370 jobs, almost 900 of which were in the healthcare sector. This was due to the cuts that had to be made in order to provide the same services, with the reduced budget.

Year 2011

Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2011 were marked by an increase in the budget compared to the previous year, increasing by 1.06% more, allocating 7125 million euros, 75 million euros more than the previous year.

In this period, generalized increases of between 1-3% per year are not to be expected, since we are in a period of economic recession and the objective was to maintain budgets. Thus, to offer quality health services to the population, the resources were reallocated to different areas of healthcare. (Law 8/2012, Madrid)

Below are some relevant aspects of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2011:

- On a positive note, budgets were not reduced this year, since, as mentioned above, there was a slight growth, trying to provide the same services for the population of Madrid, going from 7010 to 7069 million euros.
- In line with previous years, more resources were allocated to primary care in 2011. New healthcare professionals were hired and the facilities and medical equipment of health centers and local clinics were upgraded. This was done with the aim of strengthening primary care and offering quality services to citizens.
- In 2011, resources were allocated to Madrid's hospital infrastructure. New hospitals were built and existing hospital facilities and medical equipment were renovated and upgraded. Resources were also allocated to the acquisition of state-of-the-art medical technology, with the aim of offering quality and advanced health services to the population.
- This year, resources were allocated to prevention and health promotion programs in Madrid. These programs were aimed at preventing diseases and promoting healthy lifestyles among the population. Vaccination campaigns, early disease detection programs and health education campaigns were carried out.

Year 2012

In 2012, Madrid's healthcare budgets were affected by the austerity measures implemented by the Spanish government to address the economic crisis. The priority in the healthcare budget was to maintain essential services, and cuts were made in other non-essential expenses. The budget allocated this year was €7169 million, an increase of 0.62% over 2011. Around 44 million euros were allocated more than the previous year (Law 5/2011, Madrid).

As noted above, these small increases or decreases in the budget were affected by the recession of 2008, forcing the Community of Madrid to maintain almost the same budget for the required needs of the Community of Madrid.

This year's highlights were as follows:

- In line with the economic situation, the priority in Madrid's healthcare budget in 2012 was to maintain essential healthcare services to the population. Resources were allocated to guarantee the running of hospitals and health centers, and primary care was strengthened to improve citizens' access to health services. This year primary care received a total of 1869 million euros.
- The creation of a project to improve the portfolio of standardized services in Primary Care, the implementation and improvement of computerized protocols, the implementation of ultrasound in this level of health, the promotion of the role of Nursing and the prioritization of actions on vulnerable groups, stand out among the activities that the community wants to implement.
- This small increase in the healthcare budget means that growth will not continue to be the same as in the years prior to the crisis, although the commitment to providing the same level of care to the citizens of Madrid will continue.

Year 2013

In 2013, the healthcare budget was €7108 million. This was 61 million euros less than the previous year. Given the circumstances of the economic crisis, at least it maintained a healthcare system with the best possible conditions, and this was demonstrated by the fact that they lowered public spending while maintaining and even improving the healthcare services.

The Government of the Madrid encouraged the collaboration of the private sector in order to maintain the management of healthcare services and to reduce the impact on both hospital care and primary care.

A new measure that was implemented in the healthcare system was the rational use of medicines, the centralization of purchases and the use of electronic prescriptions, at the same time that a fee was introduced for the issuance of electronic prescriptions (Law 7/2012, Madrid). These measures, together with the integration and development of some hospitals and the delay in the opening of the *Collado Villalba* hospital, reduced some costs and increased the quality of health care, especially in the treatment of the elderly.

This year's highlights were similar to previous years:

- Madrid's healthcare budget in 2013 was reduced by 0.85% compared to the previous year. This was due to the need to adjust public spending and reduce the country's fiscal deficit. Despite the budget reduction, the commitment to guarantee quality healthcare to the population was maintained.
- In line with the economic situation, the priority in Madrid's healthcare budget in 2013 was maintained in keeping essential healthcare services to the population. Resources were allocated to guarantee the running of hospitals and health centers, and primary care was strengthened to improve citizens' access to health services.
- In 2013, a reduction in the workforce of the Madrid healthcare system was carried out. This was due to the need to reduce labor costs to cope with the economic crisis. The measure was not well received by workers, who protested against the layoffs.

Year 2014

According to data published by the Madrid government, the healthcare budget for 2014 amounted to approximately €6977 million, which represented a decrease of 1.84% compared to the previous year's budget, as €131 million less were allocated than the previous year, due to the crisis suffered in Spain.

This budget was intended to finance healthcare in the Madrid region, including the management of public hospitals, primary care, emergency services, social health services, prevention and health promotion programs, and other expenses related to the health sector, and thus provide the highest possible quality in the most cutting-edge sectors, as some less significant areas were affected by the cuts in the healthcare area.

In terms of budget allocation, the largest share went to public hospitals, which received about 42% of the total, followed by primary care, which received about 27%. And in smaller percentages, funds were allocated for hiring new health professionals, improving health infrastructure, and implementing efficiency measures and reducing unnecessary expenses (Law 22/2013, Madrid).

This year's highlights were:

- Work continued on the more rational use of medicines supplied by Madrid's pharmacies and healthcare centers, with progress being made in electronic management.
- The Specialty Strategic Plans for the people who needed them most, such as the elderly and the

chronically ill, were continued, thus promoting research and education in all hospitals of the Community of Madrid, as well as the development of the Results Observatory for greater control of the latter.

- The opening of *Las Margaritas* and *Arroyomolinos* health centers and the remodeling of the *Alpedrete* health center were completed.

Year 2015

In 2015, Madrid's healthcare budget amounted to approximately €7,289 million, which represented an increase of 4.47% over the previous year's budget, allocating €312 million more than in 2014. Most of the budget went to public hospital management, which received about 47% of the total. Followed by primary care, which received about 32% (Law 3/2014, Madrid). Funds were also allocated to improve healthcare infrastructure, including the construction and renovation of hospitals and health centers, as well as the acquisition of new medical equipment and technologies. Efficiency and cost-cutting measures were implemented to optimize the use of available resources and improve the quality of healthcare.

Regarding Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2015, some relevant aspects are detailed below:

- In 2015, resources were allocated to the acquisition of advanced medical technology, such as diagnostic imaging equipment and telemedicine systems. These investments improved the quality of medical services and introduced the colon cancer screening program that was implemented in most of the centers for the prevention of this tumor.
- In 2015, the number of healthcare professionals also increased more than 5,000 healthcare workers, giving greater stability to resident workers as well as new places for inclusion in the labor world. This represented one of the largest job offers that Madrid had in recent years, with almost 1,000 places to new members of the public healthcare system.
- In 2015, resources were allocated to the construction and renovation of hospitals in Madrid. There was a new infrastructure, the *Villava General Hospital*, a center that will serve more than 110,000 people in Madrid. Resources were also allocated to the renovation and improvement of medical facilities and equipment in existing hospitals, with a budget of around 4.8 billion euros.

Year 2016

In 2016, Madrid's healthcare budgets had an increase of 2.16% compared to the previous year, resulting in a total of €7,446.3 million allocated to the public healthcare system, €157.3 million more than the previous year (Law 48/2015, Madrid). Below are some relevant aspects of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2016:

- In line with the regional government's healthcare policies, the priority in Madrid's healthcare budget in 2016 was primary care, considered the foundation of the healthcare system. Resources were allocated to strengthen primary care, increasing the supply of services in health centers and improving citizens' accessibility to them.
- Unlike previous years, in 2016 there was no significant reduction in the workforce of the Madrid healthcare system. The number of healthcare professionals was maintained and the number of residents in training was increased, with the aim of ensuring the quality and continuity of healthcare.
- Prevention and health promotion programs were maintained in Madrid in 2016, with the aim of promoting healthy habits in the population and preventing diseases. Vaccination campaigns, early disease detection programs and health education campaigns were carried out.
- In 2016, I highlight the 145% increase in the item allocated to high impact medicines, amounting to more than 60 million euros and the increase in Public Health as a result of the implementation of the vaccination schedule.

Year 2017

This year, a budget of 7632.8 million euros was allocated, 186.5 million euros more than in 2016, having an increase of 2.5%. As in almost every year, most of the budget is allocated to improve the quality of health care services and in the reduction of waiting lists for surgical interventions and consultations with specialists (Law 6/2017, Madrid).

Below are some relevant aspects of Madrid's 2017 healthcare budgets:

- One of the main objectives of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2017 was to reduce waiting lists for surgical interventions and consultations with specialists. To this end, resources were allocated to hiring more medical and nursing staff, as well as to expanding the range of health services on offer.

- Another objective of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2017 was to improve primary care in order to offer more comprehensive and quality care to the population. Resources were allocated to hiring more doctors and nurses, as well as to improving the facilities and equipment of health centers.
- Primary Health Care got a budget increase of 27.5 million euros for human resources and improvement of health infrastructures, with new centers and improvements to existing ones. In addition, the *Prevecolon* Program for the early detection of colon cancer was relaunched.
- Outside the healthcare field, R&D&I activities were promoted in the accredited Health Research Institutes of the Community of Madrid. More specifically, the design and implementation of a computerized electronic visa program to improve the management and control of pharmacological treatments subject to prior visa.

Year 2018

The healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid in 2018 had an increase of 3.08% compared to the previous year, representing a total of €7867.3 million, more than €234 million compared to 2017. The main objective of the Community of Madrid was to maintain a public, universal and free healthcare system with the best quality. This measure was achieved due to the Improvement Plan, increasing the budget to the primary care item, allocating a total of more than 30 million euros, without taking into account the dispensing of prescriptions. This increase was allocated to human resources and the improvement of health infrastructures (Law 12/2017, Madrid). On the other hand, an increase in the budgets allocated to hospital care was endowed, amounting to 150 million euros, which made it possible to promote the investment plan for the large hospitals of the Community of Madrid.

Below are some highlights of Madrid's 2018 healthcare budgets:

- Resources were allocated for the modernization of Madrid's healthcare technology and infrastructure in 2018. New state-of-the-art medical equipment and technologies were acquired to improve healthcare for the population. Investments were also made in the renovation and improvement of hospital and primary care facilities.
- In 2018, the Management Pacts Program continued to be strengthened, which increased the internalization of surgical interventions and diagnostic tests, further reducing waiting list levels. A commitment was made to innovation in oncological radiotherapy, in addition to continuing with the actions already in place for chronic patients, centralized management of medium-stay beds and rationalization of highly complex processes and pathologies.

- Finally, in 2018, the promotion of Biomedical Research Foundations and prevention through vaccination of communicable diseases were established as priority actions.

Year 2019

Madrid's healthcare budgets for 2019 amounted to approximately €8106 million, the highest budget in the last 20 years, which represented an increase of 3.04% over the previous year's budget, allocating €238 million more than in 2018. As noted in previous years, resources were also allocated to reduce Madrid's waiting lists and increased the capacity of hospitals to perform surgical interventions and more resources were allocated for the recruitment of health professionals. (Law 8/2018, Madrid)

Some relevant aspects of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2019:

- In 2019, the implementation of the Hospital Infrastructure Modernization Plan 2019-2028 is addressed, which involves intervention in 22 public hospitals, with an allocation of more than 1 billion euros over the next ten years, starting in 2019 with the comprehensive refurbishment of the seven largest hospitals in the region and one-off works in 14 other centers.
- 312 million euros were also invested to develop the Health and High Technology Equipment Plan, which sought to increase overall survival and quality of life by diagnosing diseases in early stages, enabling rapid therapeutic intervention, with special attention to the pathologies with the greatest health impact, such as chronic diseases, oncological diseases, etc...

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTHCARE BUDGETS AND COVID-19

Healthcare budgets in Madrid were significantly affected by COVID-19. The pandemic significantly increased the demand for healthcare services and required a major investment in personal protective equipment, diagnostic procedures, treatments and other resources.

The Community of Madrid allocated a healthcare budget of €8,106 million for 2020, of which €2,585 million (more than 30% of the budget) was specifically allocated for the fight and research against COVID-19. This additional investment made it possible to hire more healthcare workers, purchase personal protective equipment, expand hospital facilities and carry out numerous diagnostic tests.

Due to the need to reallocate resources and prioritize the health emergency, the pandemic also impacted the planning and implementation of long-term investment projects. For example, in 2020, resources were allocated for hospital expansion to meet the demand for medical care caused by COVID-19, and some projects for the construction of new health centers were delayed.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 outbreak had a major impact on the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid. Some of the main consequences are presented below:

- **Increased expenditures:** The pandemic increased healthcare expenditures in the Community of Madrid, such as purchasing personal protective equipment, increasing hospital beds, hiring additional staff, and increasing laboratory capacity for diagnostic testing.
- **Decrease in revenues:** The pandemic affected the overall economy, which led to a decrease in revenues for the Community of Madrid, and had a negative impact on the healthcare budget.
- **Redistribution of resources:** The pandemic has forced the Community of Madrid to redistribute its resources more effectively to deal with the health emergency. This meant that some non-COVID-19 services were affected.
- **Acceleration of digitalization:** The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in the health sector, which had an impact on the health budget of the Community of Madrid. This includes the development of telemedicine platforms and investment in information technology infrastructure.

Overall, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the healthcare budgets of the Community of Madrid, with an increase in expenditures and a decrease in revenues. This has forced the Community to make a more efficient management of its resources in order to face the health emergency in the best possible way.

As if all this were not enough, the lack of consensus on the new budgets led to the extension of the 2019 budgets in the Community of Madrid for several fiscal years. The approval of the 2020 budgets was delayed due to the political and social climate in Spain in 2020, which included the COVID-19 pandemic and the call for general elections. Ultimately, the 2019 budgets were extended until 31st December 2021. This means that, all over 2020 and 2021, the same budget items were used as the previous year without the possibility of introducing modifications or updates based on the needs or

priorities derived from the COVID-19 pandemic and other events that may have impacted the economy and public services of the Community of Madrid.

However, this extension allowed to continue funding services and initiatives that were already applied in 2019, such as the healthcare system, educational initiatives and social policies, among others. Some experts have argued that this budget extension from 2019 to 2021 has limited investment capacity and adaptation to current needs, especially in a context such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the most prominent limitations are detailed below (Decree 315/2019):

- **Limitation in the management of funds:** By extending the budgets, the capacity to manage public funds in an agile and efficient manner was limited, since the items were designed for the previous year and did not take into account current needs and demands.
- **Lack of investment:** The extension also led to a stop of public investment in new projects and programs, which had a negative impact on economic growth and job creation.
- **Difficulties in planning:** The extension of budgets made long-term planning difficult, as it was uncertain what resources would be available for the coming years.
- **Uncertainty for citizens:** The extension generated uncertainty among citizens and businesses, who were uncertain about the government's priority policies and investments for the current year.
- **Risk of political instability:** The extension of the budget also posed a risk of political instability, as it increased the possibility that the government would not be able to count on the necessary support to move forward with new legislative initiatives or public policies.

In any case, the extension of the 2019 budgets was an exceptional measure that was applied in view of the impossibility of reaching a political agreement for the approval of the new budgets.

The most relevant aspects of each budget during the hardest years of COVID-19 are detailed below. It should be noted that the analysis in this section will be conducted on healthcare spending (rather than with the budget) as during these years it was planned with the 2019 budgets carried over, leading to budget deviations at record levels. This fact makes a budget analysis during these years of little relevance.

Year 2020

Madrid's healthcare spending in 2020 was conditioned by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the entire world and generated a significant increase in demand for healthcare services. Healthcare spending was 7700 million euros. This increase was mainly allocated to strengthen healthcare, especially in the areas of primary care and emergencies. This represented an increase of approximately 665 million euros allocated to the healthcare of citizens.

Below are some relevant aspects of Madrid's healthcare expenditures in 2020:

- **Expenditures increase:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Madrid's health expenditure was increased by 4.7% compared to the previous year. The objective was to ensure adequate medical care for the population and to cope with the increased demand for healthcare services. Resources were allocated to the hiring of new professionals, such as doctors, nurses and administrative personnel, as well as to the acquisition of technology and medical equipment.
- **Increased investment in hospitals:** Madrid's healthcare budget in 2020 included investment in new hospitals and the modernization of existing ones. Resources were allocated for the construction of two new hospitals, in *Collado Villalba* and *Móstoles*, and investments were made in the renovation of facilities and medical equipment in other hospitals in the region.
- **Investing in the fight against the pandemic:** Much of Madrid's healthcare budget in 2020 was allocated to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. It was invested in the purchase of personal protective equipment for medical staff, the purchase of medicines and healthcare materials, the recruitment of medical and nursing staff, and the expansion of hospital and healthcare center facilities.
- **Reorganization of healthcare services:** The COVID-19 pandemic forced a reorganization of healthcare services in Madrid in 2020. Specific units were created for the care of COVID-19 patients, primary care services were expanded, home care was reinforced and field hospitals were created to cope with the demand.
- **Maintenance of prevention and health promotion programs:** Despite the focus on pandemic control, prevention and health promotion programs were maintained in Madrid in 2020. Vaccination campaigns, early disease detection programs and health education campaigns were carried out. These programs were considered essential to prevent disease and improve the health of the population.

- **Investment in medical technology;** Resources were allocated to the acquisition of state-of-the-art medical technology in 2020, with the objective of improving the quality of healthcare services and addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Investments were made in diagnostic equipment, ventilation equipment and other medical equipment needed to treat patients with COVID-19.

It should be noted that the COVID-19 health crisis had a significant impact on the management of the healthcare budget of the Community of Madrid during the year 2020. Urgent measures were carried out to deal with the pandemic, which implied an increase in expenditures in areas such as the provision of personal protective equipment, hiring of healthcare personnel, increase in hospital beds, and adaptation of facilities for the care of patients with COVID-19. This increase in supervening expenses coupled with the lack of updated budgets for 2020 led to budget deviations levels of more than 15% (Larraz, 2022).

Year 2021

In general terms, the total expenditure of the Community of Madrid for the year 2021 was 8.25 billion euros, representing an increase of 7.2% compared to the previous year's budgets. As observed in the previous year, these expenditures were also marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to strengthen the health system to face the health crisis.

Madrid's healthcare expenditures for 2021 have been one of the largest in the history of the Community of Madrid. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented need for healthcare resources, and the Community of Madrid's 2021 expenditures reflect this need. The majority of this spending will go to hospital care, primary care and mental health care.

- **Hospital care:** In the 2021 budget, hospital care received a total of €3,437 million. This item includes hospital maintenance, the purchase of medical and technological equipment, and the hiring of healthcare and non-healthcare personnel. In addition, resources were allocated for the construction and refurbishment of hospitals, such as the construction of the *Hospital Enfermera Isabel Zendal* and the refurbishment of Tower 4 of the *Hospital Universitario La Paz*.
- **Primary Care:** Primary care is one of the most important areas of healthcare, and in Madrid's 2021 budgets €1,797 million was allocated to this area. This budget was allocated for the recruitment of healthcare and non-healthcare personnel, improvement of facilities and medical and technological equipment.

- **Mental health:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of the population, and in Madrid's 2021 budgets, 282 million euros were allocated to this area. This budget was allocated for the improvement of care for patients with mental illness, the construction and refurbishment of mental health centers, and the recruitment of specialized mental health staff.

In addition to these areas, Madrid's 2021 budgets also allocated resources to care for the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable groups. Resources were also allocated to the prevention and control of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19.

Below are some relevant aspects of Madrid's healthcare budgets in 2021:

- **Strengthening of primary care:** 2.18 billion were allocated to strengthen primary care, with the aim of improving the diagnostic and follow-up capacity of COVID-19 patients, as well as improving care for the general population.
- **Investment in infrastructure and equipment:** 145.6 million euros were allocated to the construction and improvement of healthcare infrastructure and equipment, including the expansion of hospitals and health centers, the renovation of equipment and the acquisition of advanced medical technology.
- **Reinforcement of the health professional workforce:** 32.8 million were allocated for the recruitment of new health professionals, including doctors, nurses, technicians and other specialists, with the aim of improving the health system's capacity to respond to the pandemic.
- **Prevention and health promotion programs:** 40.5 million euros were allocated to prevention and health promotion programs, including vaccination, early disease detection programs and health education campaigns.
- **Strengthening chronic patient care:** 25 million were allocated to chronic patient care programs, with the aim of improving care for people with chronic diseases and reducing hospitalizations and the use of emergency services.

RECENT BUDGETS (2022-2023)

Year 2022

After several years without consensus with the budgets, a new General Budget Law for the Community of Madrid in 2022 was finally approved. The healthcare budgets of Madrid for 2022 amounted to approximately 8787 million euros, allocating more than 680 million euros compared to the 2019 budget, which represented an increase of 8.39%, an uncommon percentage in the evolution that has experienced the Madrid healthcare¹. From this amount, 5925 million will be allocated to hospital care, including the operation and management of public hospitals in the region. Also, 2055 million will be allocated to primary care, which includes the operation and management of health centers and medical offices.

Madrid's health budgets for 2022 have several relevant aspects that are important to highlight. The major cause of this increase was the fight against COVID-19. (Law 4/2021, Madrid). Below are some of the most relevant aspects of Madrid's 2022 healthcare budgets:

- **Priority in the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic remains a major concern for society and the healthcare system. Therefore, Madrid's 2022 healthcare budget is allocating a significant portion of resources to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Resources have been allocated for the purchase of healthcare materials, such as personal protective equipment, and for diagnostic tests, as well as for the hiring of additional healthcare personnel.
- **Strengthening primary care:** Primary care is the gateway to the healthcare system and plays a fundamental role in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. For this reason, Madrid's healthcare budget for 2022 is allocating a significant amount of resources to strengthen primary care. Resources have been allocated for hiring more personnel, improving facilities and acquiring medical equipment.
- **Modernization of hospital infrastructure:** The modernization of hospital infrastructure is another relevant aspect of Madrid's healthcare budgets for 2022. Resources have been allocated for the construction of new hospitals, as well as for the renovation and modernization of existing medical facilities and equipment. Modernization of hospital infrastructure can improve the quality of medical care, reduce waiting times and increase the capacity of the healthcare system to cope with demand.

¹ However, it must be taken into account that the budgets were extended 2 years (2020 and 2021) and due to the expenditure experienced in those two years and the needs of the pandemic, the authorities were forced to raise the budget items.

- **Public health promotion:** Public health promotion is another important aspect of Madrid's healthcare budgets for 2022. Resources have been allocated for prevention and health promotion programs, as well as public health research. Public health promotion can help prevent disease and improve the health and well-being of the population.

Year 2023

Healthcare in Madrid continues to be the area where the Community of Madrid will invest the most resources, with 9789.6 million euros, which represents a growth of 11.4%, an increase of more than 1000 million euros compared to the 2022 budget. Around 6,531 million euros have been allocated for Hospital Care and 2446 million euros for Primary Care (Proyecto Presupuestos Generales, 2023).

According to the draft General Budget for 2023, the aim of these accounts, presented by the Ministry of Finance, is to modernize the Madrid Healthcare Service (Sermas) to guarantee state-of-the-art technology and excellent healthcare services.

The 80 new 24-hour healthcare centers, as well as the modernization of healthcare infrastructures, with the expansion and construction of new healthcare centers, the development of the new *La Paz Hospital*, or the reform of the *12 de Octubre Hospital*, have already begun and will become a reality in 2023.

In addition, a strengthening of the waiting list plan will be implemented until 2024, reducing by half the maximum care times according to clinical priority. A total of 215 million euros will be allocated to this initiative. With the aim of putting citizens in less than 45 days of average waiting list, citizens will receive non-urgent scheduled care for surgeries, initial consultations and diagnostic tests.

The new Mental Health and Addictions Plan, which will include new actions aimed primarily at child and adolescent care, with the creation of day hospitals and the reinforcement of programs for children and adolescents, will be another significant milestone. In an effort to increase the number of young patients recruited for screening activities, an oral health plan will also be promoted.

With the improvement of the remuneration conditions of more than 22,000 employees of the Madrid Health Service, stability and the recognition of the professional career of temporary personnel will continue to take precedence in human resources matters.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this analysis of the evolution of healthcare budgets in the Community of Madrid from 2008 reveals a series of significant trends and changes in healthcare funding in the region, especially in primary and hospital care. Throughout this period, there is a general increase in the funds allocated to healthcare, albeit with significant variations in different years and stages.

During the first years following the global financial crisis of 2008, the Community of Madrid was affected by budget cuts in multiple sectors, including healthcare. This had a negative impact on the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for the citizens of Madrid, who experienced additional difficulties due to increasing demand and the need to address emerging challenges, such as an aging population and new diseases.

However, as the economy recovered and health needs became more evident, there was a gradual increase in resources allocated to healthcare. This trend intensified from 2015 onwards, with the adoption of specific measures by the authorities to improve the situation of health services in the region.

In recent years, the Community of Madrid has experienced a substantial increase in its healthcare budget, reflecting a renewed commitment to the well-being of its citizens. This increase has enabled the implementation of various initiatives and programs aimed at strengthening the healthcare infrastructure, improving the quality of care and expanding access to medical services.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out globally in 2020, has had a significant impact on the management of healthcare budgets around the world, including in the Community of Madrid. This unprecedented health crisis has generated additional pressure on available resources and has required an extraordinary allocation of funds to address the emergency.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, there has been an effort on the part of the Madrid authorities to maintain and strengthen investment in healthcare. Healthcare budgets have been subject to adjustments and adaptations to respond to the needs generated by the crisis, ensuring the availability of sufficient resources to meet the demand for care and for the implementation of disease prevention and control strategies. In this sense, it is essential that healthcare budgets continue to evolve in a sustainable manner and in accordance with the needs of the population.

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