

Time to implement!

What is needed to strengthen the development and use of new technology to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment?

“Agenda for Health and Prosperity” Report 2025

Our goal is for Sweden to stay competitive in developing and implementing new technology that improves prevention, diagnosis and treatment. This is a priority for all of us, as the use of research advances in combination with new technology is key to solving health challenges.

Creating stronger connections between developers and healthcare professionals as well as patients, is core to success. New skills and greater knowledge exchange between the technical and medical fields are therefore required, all the way from research to implementation.

In order to increase the pace of implementation, there is also a need to adjust structures and working methods within healthcare. Sweden, with its publicly funded health care, has the ambition to provide high level health care to the population, which includes implementing cost-effective methods and technologies, while phasing out less effective ones.

The expertise needed to develop new technology to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment is a limited resource, even globally. Sweden has very strong infrastructure, both in terms of research and health-data, which is attractive for developers of new technology. Sweden should continue to build on its strengths in order to attract experts and companies for cutting edge innovation. We, the members of the think tank “Agenda for Health and Prosperity”, have performed an in-depth SWOT-analysis to identify areas that could be improved to achieve the goal of being even more competitive in developing and implementing new technology to improve health. We find that actions should be taken both with regards to strengthening competence and changing governance models. Together we have developed proposals and action plans aimed at creating long term improvement of this system of innovation.

Agenda for health and prosperity – a collaboration between **RESEARCH SWEDEN** 15 YEARS 2010–2025 and:



Summary of policy advice

To make better use of the expertise in Sweden, increased collaboration between local, regional and national levels should be encouraged and facilitated. The efforts should be linked to resources and mandates that the government has the authority to assign. The aim should be to strengthen competitiveness, while also ensuring that progress benefits patients throughout Sweden the country. Our policy advice is presented under three headings that reflect the purpose of the suggested proposal:

1. Strengthen the competence to develop and use new technology

The research, development and implementation activities taking place within university healthcare are currently conducted in a way that results in too many silos, when we instead need more connections between areas of expertise.

We propose that the government provides targeted funding to university healthcare to strengthen the R&D units.

Through dedicated government funding to actively support research, development, implementation and follow-up, these units would be able to strengthen their activities and constitute a long-term resource for ongoing healthcare services. It would allow them to increase their collaboration with other R&D units at university healthcare all through Sweden make greater use of external expertise in new technologies, and serve as a meeting place for patients, healthcare professionals, academia and companies.

2. Strengthen national processes for implementation in healthcare

When new methods or products are evaluated as cost-effective, a process for national implementation should be initiated. A national structure is required to ensure that the competence needed to implement and use an innovations is not limited to university healthcare or to certain regions.

We propose that the government commissions the National Board of Health and Welfare to implement a system for structured implementation and follow-up.

The system should include governmental support to the regions for the implementation and follow-up of new technologies aimed at improving prevention, diagnosis and treatment across the entire country. Such support should include both expertise and funding, with clearly expressed criteria and requirements.

3. Strengthen the R&D environment in the regional healthcare

For patients, healthcare, academia and companies to more actively participate in and benefit from the development, the environment for R&D within healthcare should be improved. Currently, the regions that are responsible for healthcare find regulatory and legal barriers and budgeting systems that limit the regions' ability to make room for R&D.

We propose that the regions' responsibility for research is spelled out clearer and also followed-up on. With the goal of strengthening the R&D environment we also propose adjustments of the financial governance and reimbursement models, and harmonization of the legal framework regarding the storage and use of health data

The government needs to ensure that regions adjust their reimbursement models to promote development, thereby strengthening research, education and innovation. Regions, in turn, must ensure that healthcare staff have the time, resources and capacity to engage in research, and that research-supporting personnel are available. National guidelines and routines are needed for how regions can make health data accessible for research, development and decision-making. National guidelines are also needed on several issues regarding data use. These should be aligned with the requirements of the European Health Data Space (EHDS) regulation.

The proposals we present would, taken together, strengthen a system in which the continues development of technology can meet our needs in prevention, diagnosis and treatment – both today and in the future. By making better use of competence across regional, organisational and disciplinary boundaries, and improving the conditions for long-term collaboration, we will take even more advantage of the potential of R&D, make smarter clinical choices and increase both health and prosperity in Sweden.