Europe: research exposes negative effects of private health

(August 2013) *Why private sector health kills more than it cures - countering arguments in favour of privatisation* is a briefing paper by the PSIRU research organisation that provides a wealth of data to counter the arguments that are made in favour of health care privatisation.

As in other areas of public service, health services across Europe are often confronted with the claim that private provision is more efficient and effective than the public healthcare sector.

This briefing paper puts together recent research which clearly contradicts this argument and actually demonstrates that the private healthcare sector contributes to worse health outcomes. The research is drawn from studies of countries at different levels of development and income.

The paper draws on evidence from countries throughout the world and includes the following sections:

- The advantages of public healthcare over private healthcare;

- Universal healthcare coverage of the population contributes to higher economic performance;

- Higher rates of out of pocket spending contribute to lower economic performance;

- Universal healthcare coverage represents a more effective use of resources;

- Private health care makes healthcare less accessible for a larger proportion of the population; and

- Private healthcare operates in the interests of for-profit providers not patients.

This report underlines the fact that investing in public healthcare will create a healthier population and reminds us that a healthier population will contribute more

to economic development.

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