

Austria



Health systems

Economic classification: **High Income**

Health systems summary

Austria's public healthcare is primarily delivered through a statutory health insurance (SHI) scheme that covers employees and their non-working dependents. Enrolment into an employer's insurance scheme is compulsory and so employees are usually enrolled automatically on starting new employment. The self-employed, on the other hand, must enrol into the public health insurance scheme. Under the SHI, only certain services are covered and those that are not are paid for 'out of pocket' (OOP). Individuals can also choose to visit non-SHI physicians and clinics at their own expense. The lack of coverage and insufficient treatment options provided under SHI results in high OOP expenses - in 2017, OOP expenses made up 19.2% of health expenditure.

Many Austrians have 'supplementary' private insurance to provide care not covered by the public SHI scheme. In 2013, 35% of the population was estimated to have such insurance.

Indicators

Where is the country's government in the journey towards defining 'Obesity as a disease'?	No
Where is the country's healthcare provider in the journey towards defining 'Obesity as a disease'?	No
Is there specialist training available dedicated to the training of health professionals to prevent, diagnose, treat and manage obesity?	Not known
Have any taxes or subsidies been put in place to protect/assist/inform the population around obesity?	No
Are there adequate numbers of trained health professionals in specialties relevant to obesity in urban areas?	No
Are there adequate numbers of trained health professionals in specialties relevant to obesity in rural areas?	No
Are there any obesity-specific recommendations or guidelines published for adults?	No
Are there any obesity-specific recommendations or guidelines published for children?	No
In practice, how is obesity treatment largely funded?	Out of pocket

Perceived barriers to treatment

Lack of financial investment and coverage

Fragmented or failing health system

Lack of training for healthcare professionals

Poor health literacy and behaviour

Obesity not recognised as a disease

Summary of stakeholder feedback

Obesity is not considered to be a disease by either the government or the healthcare providers in Austria. Instead, there is reportedly a lot of stigma against the individuals with obesity as it is assumed to be a result of personal failure.

As obesity is not a priority, there is limited infrastructure within the healthcare system for obesity prevention, management and treatment. There is also limited coverage by social insurance schemes for treatment and so most patients must fund treatment as an 'out of pocket' expense. Stakeholders said there is an exception for severe obesity, for which treatment (surgery) is available. Follow-up of bariatric surgery is however, said to be insufficient.

There is a lack of specialist obesity professionals in both urban and rural areas.

Based on interviews/survey returns from 2 stakeholders

Last updated: June 2020