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**Performance-indicators: their efficacy and legitimacy**

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**Abstract**

This conference focuses on the fact that European welfare states have developed into regulatory states with final instead of direct responsibility and that this change goes together with a stronger own responsibility for civil organizations, companies and individuals. My paper deals with one of the ways responsibility has been converted onto organizations. It deals with the implications of article 4 of the Dutch Act on the Quality of Health Care Facilities that obliges health care facilities to systematically collect and register data with respect to the quality of the services they offer.

Performance-indicators have been introduced to fulfil this obligation. They allow professionals, health care facilities, inspection and the public at large to acquire information about the quality of (public) services and they enable institutions both to improve the quality of their services and to take full responsibility. Performance-indicators, moreover, are a basis for inspection, audit, certification, benchmarking, etc.

According to some, performance-indicators are useful instruments to fulfil all of these tasks. According to others, the introduction of performance-indicators and the focus on measurement causes the annihilation of professional wisdom, an increase of distrust, fear

and bureaucratic red tape, a risk of data-manipulation and, in the end, the replacement of democracy by technocracy.

In my talk, I will argue that the introduction of performance-indicators is not ‘the solution to all troubles’, but that an unconditional rejection of performance-indicators is shortsighted as well. Instead of taking sides in the ideological debate, I will argue that it is more fruitful to carefully investigate the conditions in which performance measurement can be both effective and legitimate.

Keywords: performance-indicators, self-regulation, efficacy, legitimacy, health care facilities.