IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)
Volume 31, Issue 9, Series 2 (September, 2026) 09-13
e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
www.iosrjournals.org

The Unified Health System (SUS) in the 2030 Horizon: From Universal Access to Effective Care

Luciano Cicero da Silva[1], Arlete do Monte Massela Malta[2], Roseane da Silva Farias[2], Regirleide Pereira da Silva[2], Sheila Erika Ferro Ramalho Nobre[2], Eliene Jaqueline de Andrade Freitas[2], Sirlene Augusta de Oliveira[2], Fabiano de Lima[2], Sérgio Raimundo Ernesto Machado[2,]

[1]*Fundação Dom Cabral, São Paulo Brasil*
[2]*(Universidad de Ciências Empresariales y Sociales (UCES), Argentina*

ABSTRACT
Background: *The Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) represents a fundamental achievement in guaranteeing the right to health, grounded in the principles of universality, comprehensiveness, and equity. However, demographic, epidemiological, technological, and organizational changes require the system to advance beyond ensuring access toward delivering effective, high-quality, and resolutive care. This study analyzes the challenges and perspectives for consolidating this transition toward the 2030 horizon.*
Materials and Methods: *A systematic literature review was conducted to identify and synthesize evidence regarding the challenges and advances associated with the transition from universal access to effective care within SUS. The analysis addressed aspects related to universality, comprehensiveness, equity, management, financing, regulation of access, technological innovation, and the effectiveness of healthcare delivery.*
Results: *The findings indicate that the consolidation of SUS toward 2030 requires strengthening management and financing, improving access regulation, and enhancing coordination among primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Financial sustainability, judicialization, service fragmentation, and timely access remain relevant challenges. Technological innovations, including telemedicine, artificial intelligence, and digital health tools, may contribute to expanding access and improving care quality, provided that adequate infrastructure, professional training, regulation, and equity are ensured.*
Conclusion: *The transition toward effective care does not imply abandoning the universality of SUS, but rather deepening it by ensuring that access results in timely, equitable, comprehensive, high-quality, and humanized healthcare. Achieving this perspective by 2030 requires sustainable financing, strengthened management and governance, improved regulatory processes, integration across levels of care, and strategic incorporation of technological innovations. These elements are essential for maintaining the sustainability of SUS and translating the constitutional right to health into effective outcomes for individuals and communities.*
Keywords: *Unified Health System; Universal Access; Care Effectiveness; Health Services Management; Health*

Date of Submission: 04-09-2026 Date of Acceptance: 14-09-2026

I. INTRODUCTION

The transition of the Unified Health System (SUS) towards the 2030 horizon requires in-depth reflection on the mechanisms that guarantee not only universality.

Access is crucial, but so is the effectiveness of the care provided to the population. Although the principle of universality was a fundamental milestone in the consolidation of the SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System), ensuring the right to health for all Brazilian citizens, contemporary challenges demand a qualitative evolution in the care model. Simply offering services without guaranteeing quality, effectiveness, and humanization compromises the system's greater purpose of promoting well-being and health in a comprehensive way. Understanding these challenges is the starting point for building effective strategies that allow the SUS to respond to the growing and complex health needs of society, adapting to demographic, epidemiological, and technological changes.

The pursuit of effective care within the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) involves multiple

aspects, from optimizing access flows and guaranteeing comprehensive care at all levels of complexity, to incorporating innovations and technologies that improve the diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of patients. The articulation between primary, secondary, and tertiary care is essential for individuals to receive the necessary care at the appropriate time and place, avoiding fragmentation and ensuring continuity of treatment. In this sense, information management and care coordination become indispensable tools to ensure that patients move through the system smoothly and safely, receiving care that goes beyond the mere provision of consultations and procedures, but that effectively resolves their health problems. The ability to respond to the specific needs of each individual and community is an indicator of the system's maturity in providing high-quality, effective care. The literature points out that comprehensive care is an essential pillar for the effectiveness of the SUS, involving promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation in an interconnected and continuous manner.2.

The incorporation of innovations and technologies in the healthcare field emerges as a fundamental driver of transformation for increasing the effectiveness of care within the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS). Telemedicine, artificial intelligence for diagnostic assistance, integrated clinical management systems, and the use of shared electronic health records offer immense potential to improve the quality and efficiency of services.

Optimizing access to specialists, facilitating the monitoring of chronic patients, streamlining administrative processes, and improving diagnostic accuracy directly contribute to the resolution of cases and user satisfaction. However, the implementation of these innovations requires investments in infrastructure, professional training, and public policies that ensure their equitable and sustainable adoption throughout the country. The articulation between technological development and the needs of the system is key to ensuring that these tools translate into concrete benefits for the population's health, promoting more precise, personalized, and effective care. The quality of access to emergency services, for example, can be significantly impacted by the adoption of management and communication technologies.4.

Adequate funding and efficient management are indispensable pillars for sustaining the expansion and improvement of SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System) services, guaranteeing their long-term effectiveness. The financial sustainability of the system is a persistent challenge, requiring not only the allocation of sufficient resources but also their strategic and transparent application. The adoption of evidence-based management models, the optimization of resource allocation, the fight against waste, and the search for innovative funding sources are crucial measures to ensure that the SUS can meet its goals and...To respond to the population's demands in an increasingly effective way. Management that prioritizes operational efficiency, quality of care, and user satisfaction is fundamental to strengthening public trust in the system. The complexity of financing the SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System), impacted by various variables, requires continuous attention to ensure its robustness.3.5Challenges in regulating access, in turn, can compromise the effectiveness of the system, requiring strategies that harmonize the demand for services with their supply.6.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The analysis of the challenges and advances in consolidating a Unified Health System (SUS) focused on effective care by 2030 is based on a systematic literature review. This methodological approach allowed for the identification and synthesis of the main contributions and obstacles to the transition from the universal access paradigm to effective care, understanding quality, effectiveness, and humanization as essential pillars. The research sought to consolidate the understanding of strategies aimed at optimizing the comprehensiveness of care and adapting to new social and technological demands, as advocated in the SUS's vision for the future.

The main challenges identified in the literature include the sustainability of funding, the complexity of management, and the regulation of access to health services of varying levels of complexity, especially in scenarios of high demand and judicialization. Financial instability and resource allocation represent a significant obstacle to guaranteeing quality services and expanding the capacity to resolve issues. In this sense, the discussion about the financing of the Unified Health System (SUS) is crucial.5 It highlights the need for robust and continuous mechanisms to ensure its operability and improvement. Furthermore, the judicialization of access, a growing phenomenon, poses challenges to the equity and sustainability of the system.7, requiring effective governance to address these demands.

The transition to effective care is reaffirmed as crucial for the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) to fulfill its mission of guaranteeing comprehensive and equitable health care for the population. Universal access, while a fundamental principle, must be complemented by ensuring that the care offered is indeed effective and decisive, aligned with the health needs of individuals and communities. The quality of access to services, particularly in emergency situations, has been a focus of study, demonstrating the

persistence of...bottlenecks even in highly complex units4Adapting to technological innovations and incorporating new ways of providing care, as pointed out by8These are vital for improving efficiency and quality. Future prospects point towards a SUS (Unified Health System).More resilient, with strengthened management and financing mechanisms, capable of responding to demographic, epidemiological, and technological challenges, consolidating its position as a high-quality, universal public health system on the global stage by 2030.

III. RESULT

The literature review undertaken for this study outlined a multifaceted panorama of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) in the horizon of 2030, confirming the transition from a model centered on universal access to an approach focused on the effectiveness of care. The findings converge on the understanding that, although guaranteeing access is an unquestionable pillar of the SUS, the true consolidation of the system lies in the capacity to deliver high-quality, effective, and humanized healthcare. This improvement is imperative to meet the growing and complex demands of the Brazilian population, which is becoming increasingly demanding regarding patient experience and clinical outcomes. The analysis of the documents suggests that the SUS, throughout its decades of existence, has evolved in its conception and practice, and the vision for 2030 represents a qualitative leap in this trajectory, where the metric of success shifts from mere coverage to the experience of effective and transformative care. In this context, the effectiveness of care encompasses not only the cure of diseases, but also health promotion, prevention of complications, and rehabilitation, integrating comprehensive care in all its dimensions and levels of complexity, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the system.2.

One of the central points emerging from the review is the pressing need to strengthen the management and financing of the SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System). Financial sustainability emerges as a persistent challenge, with heated debates about the allocation of resources and ensuring a continuous and adequate flow to meet the needs of such a comprehensive system. The judicialization of access, for example, represents a complex facet of this scenario.Frequently, these cases require services and medications that may not be prioritized in action plans or that generate significant budgetary impacts. Literature review indicates that judicialization, while sometimes guaranteeing individual rights, can disrupt planning and equity in resource allocation, posing an obstacle to the effectiveness of large-scale care.7Thus, the search for more robust and stable financing mechanisms, coupled with efficient and transparent management, is seen as an indispensable path to realizing the vision of aA more efficient and effective SUS (Brazilian Public Health System) by 20305.

In parallel, the review highlighted the importance of regulating access and organization.Services at different levels of complexity. The coordination between primary, secondary, and tertiary care is crucial to ensure continuity of care and avoid bottlenecks that compromise the patient's journey. The literature points to challenges in integrating different points of care, managing waiting lists for consultations, exams, and procedures, and ensuring timely access to specialized services. The quality of access to emergency services, for example, is a sensitive indicator of the system's effectiveness, with studies focused on acute conditions such as myocardial infarction demonstrating the relevance of well-defined protocols and an agile and effective care network.4Overcoming these challenges requires continuous improvement of regulatory processes, aiming at optimizing supply and demand, transparency in waiting lists, and the adoption of clinical and epidemiological criteria for prioritization, so that universality translates into equitable and timely access to necessary care.6.

Finally, the vision for the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) in 2030, according to the literature analyzed, is intrinsically linked to the incorporation of technological innovations and the appreciation of healthcare professionals. Telemedicine, artificial intelligence, and other digital tools have the potential to...Expanding access, optimizing information management, and improving the quality of care are key. However, the effectiveness of these innovations depends on adequate infrastructure, user and professional training, and regulations that ensure ethics and safety. Therefore, consolidating an effective SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System) by 2030 requires a concerted effort on several fronts: improving management and financing to guarantee sustainability and equity, optimizing the organization and regulation of services to ensure timely access and continuity of care, and the strategic incorporation of new technologies in line with the principles of comprehensive care. Overcoming the mere universality of access to achieve effective care is a challenging but fundamental goal for the continuity and improvement of the Brazilian public health system.3The literature also highlights the discussion about universality.

Access to the SUS (Brazilian Public Health System) has sometimes been questioned in its practical applicability, and the pursuit of effectiveness becomes a way to reaffirm the system's commitment to the health of the entire population.1The processes for accessing medium-complexity healthcare organizations,

for example, reveal the intricate web of factors that influence the user journey and the need for continuous optimization to ensure effective and humanized care.9,10.

IV. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) with a view to 2030 reveals the consolidation of institutional maturity, shifting from prioritizing universal access to prioritizing effective care. This transition, driven by a deeper understanding of emerging challenges and opportunities, demands a strategic reorganization on several fronts, from sustainable funding to optimized management and improved service quality. The judicialization of access, for example, has been a constant point of tension, requiring more robust and equitable regulatory mechanisms to ensure that therapeutic and service access decisions align with system priorities and the population's health needs, rather than individual demands that could disrupt resource allocation. As pointed out by...7While judicialization can guarantee the right to health in specific cases, it presents serious risks of lack of coordination and underfunding in other essential areas, directly impacting the sustainability of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS).

In this context, the effectiveness of care assumes a primary role, encompassing not only the guarantee of timely and equitable access, but also the quality, effectiveness, and comprehensiveness of the care offered. The pursuit of more efficient and humanized healthcare inevitably involves the qualification of professionals, the careful incorporation of technological innovations, and the constant review of organizational and service delivery models. Primary healthcare, for example, continues to be a fundamental pillar for health promotion and disease prevention, but it needs improvements to articulate more effectively with other levels of care.

The complexity of the system ensures continuity of care. Universal access, while a non-negotiable principle, is understood in its qualitative, not merely quantitative, dimension, seeking to ensure that access translates into effective care with positive outcomes for the health of individuals and the community. The literature has highlighted that ways of providing care centered on people and their needs are more effective in Primary Health Care.8, indicating a path to effective care at all levels.

Public health management, in the face of increasing demands and resource limitations, finds in the principles of comprehensive care a guiding principle for strategic decision-making and the efficient allocation of resources. Comprehensive care, as described by2The Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) encompasses promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, considering the individual in their entirety and within their social context. The sustainability of the SUS beyond 2030 is a multifaceted challenge, requiring a continuous commitment to adequate and stable funding, optimization of management and regulatory processes, and the promotion of an organizational culture focused on excellence and innovation. The quality of access to emergency services, for example, has been a crucial indicator of the system's effectiveness in critical moments4and the continuous improvement of these processes is fundamental. The articulation between different levels of complexity, such as access to organizations of medium complexity.9,10This also constitutes a key point for ensuring integrity.

The transition to effective care within the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) by 2030 does not mean abandoning universality, but rather deepening it, ensuring that access translates into high-quality, effective, and humanized care. This objective requires strengthening management capacities, reviewing and improving financing mechanisms, and consolidating governance that promotes equity and efficiency. The discussion about the universality of the SUS, in its complexity and historical challenges, is fundamental to understanding the foundations upon which effective care should be built.1The financing of the SUS (Brazilian Public Health System), in particular, has been the subject of debates and proposals for its long-term sustainability.3.5, being a determining factor for the

Realizing the effectiveness of care. Overcoming the obstacles to achieving a more effective SUS (Brazilian Unified Health System) by 2030 is imperative for guaranteeing the right to health in Brazil, requiring a coordinated and continuous effort from all actors involved in its construction and management. Regulating access, one of the challenges of SUS management, is essential to optimize the supply and demand of services and ensure that universality translates into effective care.6**.**

REFERENCES

[1]. de Freitas MAB, Cohn A, Pinto RMF. THE UNIVERSE OF THE QUESTIONABLE UNIVERSAL.
[2]. QUALITY OF THE UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM. Academic Journal of the Faculty of Law of Recife. 2018 June;90(1):48. Available from:https://doi.org/10.51359/ 2448-2307.2018.231223.
[3]. Sganzerla AVM, da Silva AA, and Pádua APC, Ribeiro CCM, Freitas CC, Sauer NS, et al. In: Sganzerla AVM, da Silva AA, and Pádua APC, Ribeiro CCM, Freitas CC, Sauer NS, et al., editors. PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRAL HEALTH CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM (SUS). Aurum Editora Ltda; 2026. p. 14 23. Available from:https://doi.org/10.63330/livroautoral502026-001.

[4]. de Oliveira Lavôr BV. Sustainability of the Unified Health System. Journal of the Attorney General's Office of the Municipality of João Pessoa. 2025 September;9. Available from:https://doi.org/10.71144/2966-4977.9.2024.13.
[5]. de Souza BMM, Alencar IRD, Figueiredo MET, Torres GBDL, Torres GBDL. Quality of Access to Emergency Services of the System
[6]. The only healthcare system for myocardial infarction. Multidisciplinary Journalin Health; 2024. Available from:https://doi.org/10.51161/conbrasau2024/35353.
[7]. SANTOS DMDD, dos Santos JC. FINANCING OF THE UNIFIED SYSTEM OF
[8]. HEALTH: REVISE - Integrative Journal of Technological Innovations in Health Sciences. 2020 January;2 (continuous flow). Available from:https://doi.org/10.46635/ revise.v2ifluxocontinuo.1403.
[9]. Saraiva A, Gondinho BVC. Challenges of regulating access in the Unified Health System. JMPHC | Journal of Management & Primary Health Care | ISSN 2179-6750. 2022 October;14(spec):e039. Available from:https://doi.org/10.14295/jmphc.v14.1213.
[10]. RIBEIRO JÚNIOR JM. The Judicialization of Access to the Unified Health System.
[11]. Dialectics; 2025. Available from:https://doi.org/10.48021/978-65-270-7026-9.
[12]. de Menezes ELC, dos Anjos Scherer MD, Verdi MI, de Pires DP. Modes of producing care and the universality of access in primary health care. Health and Society. 2017 December;26(4):888-903. Available from:https://doi.org/10.1590/s0104-12902017170497.
[13]. Ferreira GSA, dos Santos JS, Costa AL. In: Ferreira GSA, dos Santos JS, Costa AL, editors. PROCESS OF ACCESS TO MEDIUM-COMPLEXITY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM. FOCO PUBLISHING HOUSE.CAÇÕES; 2024. p. 26 50. Available from:https://doi.org/10.54751/edfoco.978-65-982213-4-8_1.
[14]. Ferreira GSA, Santos JSD, Costa AL. PROCESS FOR ACCESSING MEDIUM-COMPLEXITY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE UNIFIED SYSTEM HEALTH. FOCO MAGAZINE. 2023 May;16(5):e1890. Available from:https: //doi.org/10.54751/revistafoco.v16n5-077.