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EUROPÄISCHE VEREINIGUNG DER LEITENDEN KRANKENHAUSÄRZTE
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ASSOCIAZIONE EUROPEA DEI MEDICI OSPEDALIERI
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ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΑ ΑΣΟCΙΑCΙΑ ΗΑ ΣΤΑΡΣΗΤΕ ΒΟΛΗΙCΗΝΗ ΛΕΚΑΡΗ
ASOCIAȚIA EUROPEANĂ A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

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What has happened since last meeting?

National report from the Norwegian Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (Of) - 2021



1. COVID - 19

When the Norwegian Medical Association attended the annual tariff conference in February 2020 everything seemed as any other year. A few weeks later, everyday life was turned upside down. On March 12 2020, Norway introduced a lock down which lead to the strongest and most intrusive measures we have experienced in peacetime.

Among other things, health care personnel were prohibited from international travel (both business trips and private trips), strict quarantine measures were introduced, and people were advised to avoid public transport if possible. Schools and kindergartens were closed, access controls were introduced in nursing homes and hospitals – and eventually a ban on visits was implemented. Cultural and sports events , gyms, hairdressers etc were also closed. This was also the day the first death due to COVID 19 was registered.

The rest of 2020 was marked by uncertainty. The recommendations and rules changed several times depending on the current situation and planning physical meetings and activities was difficult.

This affected the medical professions everyday activities and the work of the Norwegian Association of senior Hospital Physicians (Of).

The boards workload has increased due to the pandemic. A lot of time has been spent in meetings, dealing with cases and dialogue with the various levels of the health care system; including general practitioners, regional health care authorities, public health authorities, The Directorate of Health, the Ministry of Health and the media.

When Norway went into lockdown, the board immediately switched to digital communication and already on March 11, the first digital meeting with the union representatives for the Young Doctors Association was conducted. The Of board often met weekly with union representatives from the hospitals.

During the last year the board of the Norwegian Association of senior Hospital Physicians (Of) has worked on enhancing our digital communications platforms and has used both Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp.

Based on the prevailing uncertainty, a central agreement was negotiated with Spekter and Virke concerning changes to the working time provisions for hospital doctors. Spekter is responsible for running the state hospitals and is regulated by specific legislation. The agreement allowed for a change in working plans with a three day notice period. It was explicitly stated in the agreement that it should only be used in special cases and only after discussion with the local union representatives. Separate salary provisions were also negotiated. The agreement was entered into for a period of six months and was not extended.

Mid-October the Norwegian Medical Associations organized a full day conference concerning experiences and lessons learned from the pandemic.

2. Public consultations

Before decisions are made by the authorities the cases are open to public consultation. Consultations are used to enable citizens, organizations and businesses to give input to and work as a checks and balances on the authorities. These consultations are an important part of the democratic right to be involved in shaping public policy. It is important to include the input of those who are affected by policy changes.

Consultations can be about proposals for new laws and regulations or changes in these. The board of Of prioritizes input into the various consultation hearings. All of Ofs consultation statements are published on Ofs website.

3. Hospital construction

Of was instrumental in putting the decision making process for hospital construction on the agenda in 2020. The background was many examples of newer hospitals being built too small. Of therefore engaged a consultancy firm (Agenda Kaupang) to examine and document the decision making process for the planning and construction of Østfold Hospital.