

May 6th, 2022

Statement from NordÖl (Council of Nordic Consultants) regarding planning of new hospitals

Gathering at the annual meeting and on behalf of the hospital doctors from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, NordÖl would like to give a joint statement regarding the planning of hospitals.

The core task of a modern hospital is to provide high quality specialized healthcare with doctors and other professionals working closely together. That gives unique possibilities including use of advanced equipment, clinical research and development of new methods - but also requires special leadership and plannings.

Many of the hospitals in the Nordic countries are old, the facilities do not always provide good working conditions for doctors and sometimes impair good patient flow. Often new hospitals are insufficiently funded, and many projects are delayed or paused. Often the size of a new hospital (units) is reduced during the planning process in order to fit the financing. Resulting in a shortage of rooms, number of beds and offices for healthcare workers (physicians and supporting health professionals).

Healthcare also has a responsibility for health and disease prevention measures and should set a good example with environments that promote health, a good working conditions and promote sustainability with climate-smart solutions.

NordÖl proposes that

- Future hospitals are built with sufficient space. Doctors are essential and irreplaceable for patient care and need to be provided with good working conditions. Physicians must have access to dedicated, undisturbed workplaces ensuring patients' safety and integrity, especially for doctors who have several workplaces. Sufficient workspaces are necessary also for education, mentorship, training and research, as well as suitable on-call rooms and on-duty sleeping-rooms.
- Design of the hospitals building should support workflow. The planning process and decision making must focus on functionally and building design should promote health. Optimal environments for communication and doctor-patient interaction must have highest priority.

- In planning and building of new hospitals doctors' and other healthcare professional unions should be closely involved from early stages of the process and the representatives have to be provided with sufficient time and resources to participate.
- Future hospitals must be built with a sufficient number of beds. Both for normal wards and intensive care.
- Hospitals should have flexible solutions for multiple occupancy hospital rooms for increased need in case of disasters, war, pandemics, etc.
- Hospitals should when possible be built with a patient hotel served by medical staff in order to avoid traveling early mornings and provide post-procedure follow-up where necessary.
- Hospitals should be built close to existing infrastructure in order to avoid unnecessary travel for patients and medical staff.
- Hospital planning must have a long-term focus on future healthcare needs. Planning should promote flexible solutions when building so that both current and future needs are met. As hospitals are a considerable producer of waste there should be a special focus on sustainability.