

October 30th, 2025

Statement from NordÖl (The Nordic Council of Senior Physicians) regarding medical leadership

To ensure high-quality, sustainable healthcare in the Nordic region, we must place clinical expertise and professional integrity at the center of leadership. When physicians and other health professionals with direct patient care experience take leadership roles, trust, quality, and long-term outcomes are strengthened.

We therefore recommend the following principles:

1. Leadership rooted in clinical insight

Medical and clinical leaders should have a strong foundation in patient care, professional ethics, and evidence-based practices. Their experience is essential for navigating complex medical, ethical, and organizational decisions.

2. Close partnership between clinical leaders and administrative counterparts

We support models where physician leaders work together with administrators. Decision-making with correct supporting functions ensures that clinical quality, patient needs, and resource stewardship are balanced.

3. Leadership as a time-limited service

Medical leadership could ideally be time-limited, with clearly defined terms and expectations. This allows physicians to contribute their expertise in leadership while maintaining a strong connection to clinical practice. A return to patient care should be seen as a natural and valued part of the leadership cycle, helping to preserve credibility and frontline insight.

4. Values-driven leadership with the patient first

Leadership must be anchored in values such as respect, professionalism, and compassion. All decisions should ultimately serve the best interests of the patient.

5. Strategic investment in leadership development

Health systems must invest in identifying and developing future medical leaders. Training should include management, ethics, collaboration, and systems understanding. Leadership should be seen as a contribution to the profession—not a reward or escape from clinical duties.

Physician-led leadership models are key to resilient, trustworthy and learning healthcare systems. We call on governments, universities, and healthcare organizations to strengthen medical leadership for the benefit of patients and society.