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Facing Our Challenges Head on

These days hospitals in Europe are facing considerable challenges. Every country is struggling with the same issues: how to ensure top quality, efficient and effective medical and nursing care, often under extremely difficult conditions.

The economic and financial crisis is far from over; its effects are still being felt. Demographic developments warrant a change of views and alterations to our structures and processes in the hospital and in healthcare as a whole. Coping with and organising these changes requires a qualified management team with good leadership skills.

These links and connections formed the basis for choosing the theme of our recent EAHM in Luxembourg. A variety of reports and contributions at the congress from our countries' hospitals described the challenges and issues we currently face and showcased some possible solutions. It was an impressive spectacle to behold: colleagues from across Europe came together to discuss successfully shaped strategic and operative management plans. In this edition, we offer some insights from the congress in our review. One key conclusion is the basic preconditions for success are altered structures and processes.

Our association has been working intensively on the IMPO-Model, which was officially launched in Luxembourg. It serves to define a 'common thread' in form of a working tool (IMPO: Inputs-Management-Processes-Outcomes). It should be seen as a system in which we define characteristics and elements of management for hospitals and relate them to prevailing conditions, structures, processes and most of all to the results achieved (outcomes). The aim of the IMPO-Model is to help create a system (in the style of a toolbox) with standardised elements, and to reduce complexity. It encompasses all that is necessary for an effective and good management, in order to strategically and operatively lead the hospital enterprise to success and good results – including visions, mission statements, goals, basic principles, instruments and tools. In summary, this is a question of developing an extensive set of guidelines within a given framework, and within these set rules to guide and monitor processes in a way that allows good results to follow, both for patients and for the public supply mandate.

Hospitals stand for high quality healthcare including the appropriate emergency care. But they also stand for medical advances, a lot of jobs and are therefore an important input for economic power and growth. The next European Congress of the EAHM will pick up on both these aspects of hospitals in Europe under the headline: "Health Economy – our responsibility for the people". It is the association's 25th congress, in the 25th year after Europe's separation finally came to an end. You are cordially invited to join us in Berlin from 11th to the 13th of September 2014. We are looking forward to it!

For more information, please visit our website: www.eahm-berlin2014.de

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