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### Association of Hospital Managers Physicians of Lithuania

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The Association of Hospital Managers Physicians of Lithuania (LAHMP) was founded 22 years ago by a small group of enthusiasts - managers of healthcare institutions. Over the last decade it has changed in terms of numbers (the number of members has increased from 50 to 130), and quality. Statutes were amended and the LAHMP became the associated structure, bringing together institutions – legal entities and their directors, and other senior level health workers. The ambition of the association members is to achieve positive changes in the performance of both institutions, and the entire healthcare (HC) system, and to provide patients with higher-quality, more efficient and more affordable services.

In 1996, LAHMP joined the European Association of Hospital Managers (EAHM) during the Congress in Tampere, Finland. This has opened up new opportunities for the association to participate in various events and directly interact with European colleagues sharing different experiences (such as the efficiency of reforms) and information.

The association's mission is to unite its members for joint activities by transforming and improving the performance of healthcare facilities, improving the quality of healthcare services, their organisation, participating in the processes of governmental institutions in shaping health policy and participating in the activities of international institutions and organisations. Recently, the association is focusing mainly on the training of our association members: managers and other senior personnel. Other key activities focus on organisation, coordination, researching new funding sources for healthcare institutions, disseminating information among its members about new innovative healthcare management service methods and forms of work organisation.



Historically, managers of our country's health institutions are mainly medical doctors; therefore, training in managerial, legal and economic areas is essential for our association. Every five years we organise training courses for all healthcare managers, under the title "Lithuanian health system development". For this purpose, we have developed joint projects of LAHMP institutions to receive funding from the EU Structural Funds for the subsequent managerial and professional knowledge development of our association managers and their institutions' personnel – doctors, nurses and other professionals.

During the period of 2009-2011, a total of 11 LAHMP institutions implemented the project "Improvement of performance of healthcare institutions and services, by improving the skills of employees". The project involved the training of 2315 participants – managers, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers.

In 2012-2013, the association initiated and implemented the project "Education of social partnership skills of healthcare employers and trade union representatives" in conjunction with the country's healthcare trade union. The training was attended by 1,000 healthcare institution employees and trade union members. A total of eight institutions signed collective agreements and set up four safety and health committees.

Currently, like many other countries, Lithuania is still experiencing the economic recession and financial downturn. At the end of 2012 we had the parliamentary elections and a change of the government. The new government and the Ministry of Health have introduced numerous innovations in the country's healthcare system. Our association makes a great effort by offering strategic directions in the country's health financing system,

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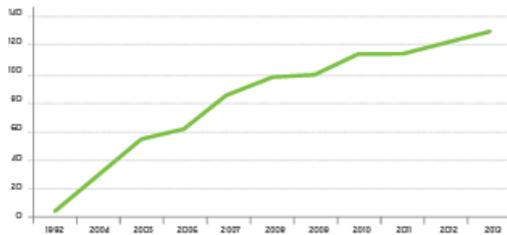
further reform principles that will determine the management changes in the health system in the national healthcare programme prepared for the period of 2013-2020, and is involved in medical community building activities.

With Lithuania's accession to the EU and the beginning of the free movement of citizens, goods and services, many well-trained doctors and nurses from our country left to work abroad. As a result, now we are facing the shortage of medical professionals, particularly in the periphery of the country. The association constantly offers the ways of addressing issues of human resources in healthcare facilities to the government, the ministries of health, education and science, and higher medical schools.

The constant spotlight of the LAHMP activities is on the quality of healthcare services. Quality and safety can be ensured by a system of institution accreditation. We have been introduced to the accreditation systems most often applied in the European hospitals, and a large number of our institutions already have implemented quality management systems and the European certificates of management.

The association is participating, along with the Health Ministry, State Patient Fund in implementing the new EU Directive on patients' rights and ensuring the freedom of movement and the right to the necessary assistance in the EU member countries for the insured.

Table 1: Growth of Association Members



Managers of healthcare institutions continuously focus on e-health issues. The association participates in the development of the e-health strategy, design and spread of the e-health services in institutions, and promotion of their use among patients. Many institutions are implementing an electronic preliminary patient appointment reservation system; developing the hospital information system and the uniform national e-health system. On 12-13 October 2011, the LAHMP organised an international conference in Vilnius "Achievements of Healthcare Institutions in optimizing Management of Information Technologies", with participation and presentations from LAHMP lecturers.

The country has few private healthcare institutions (the exceptions being family clinics, dental clinics and drugstores). Therefore, the association often addresses the issues of rational approach to public-private partnership, and promotes the cooperation between public and private sectors.

In recent years, especially after the Lithuania's accession to the European Union, big changes took place in the country's health care system: our legislation is adapted according to the European Standard; healthcare institutions are subject to the same modern diagnostic and treatment technologies, hospitals and clinics are managed and renovated. We are pleased to note that the

managers of health care institutions, members of our Association, take the most active part in these processes.

In the second half of 2013, as part of the Lithuania's Presidency of the European Union, the country held a series of events related to the development of business, economic and finance. Among others, it organised the international "Public sector efficiency conference". The LAHMP was actively involved in the event by delivering presentations and taking part in discussions related to healthcare.

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