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### National News

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#### The Polish Association of Hospital Directors Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

In honour of the 20th anniversary, Mieczyslaw Pasowicz, the President of the Polish Association of Hospital Directors, has written a book on the history of the association and its numerous activities.

#### The History

The political changes in Poland of 1989 and the democratisation of public life and the development of international cooperation became an inspiration and support for changes in the healthcare system. The directors of Polish hospitals visited hospitals in Copenhagen in 1992, in the wake of an agreement on Polish– Danish cooperation, which had been signed by Copenhagen voivode, Vibeke Storm Rasmussen and Krakow voivode, Tadeusz Piekarczyk. The cooperation was supervised by Jerzy Miller (the head of the Voivodeship Office) and Asger Hansen (the president of the Danish Association of Hospital Managers). In May of 1993, the Polish Association of Hospital Directors became a legal entity. From the founders, the members of the first management board were elected: Mieczysław Pasowicz, as the president, Janusz Hałuszka and Wojciech Przybylski as vice presidents, Jadwiga Szerla as a treasurer and Aleksandra Grabowska as a secretary.

The Polish Association of Hospital Directors became a member of the European Association of Hospital Managers in Berlin, during the congress in September 1994.

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#### Outlook for the Future

The Polish Association of Hospital Managers came into existence 20 years ago, when the political and economic situation in Poland was completely different. Then, the main objective was educating the medical environment in view of planned changes in healthcare system and preparations for the reforms to come. Now, the health policy in Poland needs changes of a different kind, yet the level of health awareness is, and reflects the changing healthcare situation, much better than before.

The important issue is hospital restructuring and transformation. During this time the number of hospital beds and state owned hospitals decreased. This brings the problems of contract fragmentation, timesheet processing, multi-jobbing, and the sense of the limited access to state-funded health services. Thus, it is necessary to adjust the structure and the number of hospital beds and medical staff in hospitals as well as to adapt the funding system to the current and future needs of society. The sense of patients' responsibility for their health is on the increase, too, which forces hospitals to get more involved in promoting active and healthy ageing within the concept of silver economy and geriatric medical care. The association will suggest developing new organisational and technical solutions in the area of medical and hospital services, taking into consideration the following factors: the ageing population, the technological advances, the economic crisis, the need for the reduction of hospital debts and introducing additional sources of income in healthcare system. For many years we have been participating in activities aimed at improving quality of healthcare, patient safety and risk management. The association seems to be a perfect tool for requesting on the behalf of national hospitals reference network and cooperation of the public and private sector. A bigger participation of the Polish Association of Hospital Managers in developing a strategy for medical, demographic and economic challenges of the 21st century is needed.

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