

# PRISTOP K DRUŽBENO ODGOVORNIM AKTIVNOSTIM V JAVNEM ZDRAVSTVENEM ZAVODU BOLNIŠNICA SEŽANA

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**Povzetek:** Bolnišnica Sežana je specialna bolnišnica, opravlja zdravstveno dejavnost na sekundarni ravni: specialistično bolnišnično dejavnost na področju zdravljenja in rehabilitacije kroničnih pljučnih bolnikov ter internistično zdravljenje in rehabilitacijo bolnikov, t.j. podaljšano splošno bolnišnično zdravljenje z/in rehabilitacijo ter spremljajoče bolnišnične dejavnosti. Na področju specialistične ambulantne dejavnosti izvaja: dejavnost dialize, pulmologije, kardiologije, tireologije, nefrologije, splošne internistike, psihiatrije, urologije in kompleksno UZ diagnostiko. Izvaja še: fizioterapevtska dejavnost, dejavnost lekarn, laboratorija in druge dejavnosti, ki so potrebne za delovanje zavoda. Poslanstvo bolnišnice Sežana: zadovoljni pacienti in njihovi svojci, kvalitetno opravljene storitve, zadovoljni zaposleni in pozitivno finančno poslovanje. Bolnišnica stremi k dobri organizaciji, učinkovitosti, k opravljanju zdravstvene nege in medicinskega dela na najvišji stopnji strokovnosti in upoštevanju smernic, ki veljajo v razvitem svetu. Zaposlene spodbuja k učinkoviti izrabi delovnega časa, doslednosti, ter skrbi za varnost pacientov. Prizadevamo si, da delovne naloge opravimo po svojih najboljših močeh, učinkovito, v čim krajšem času, v skladu z veljavnimi standardi kakovosti v naši državi in mednarodnimi standardi kakovosti. Goji se pozitivna organizacijska kultura, kvalitetno komunikacijo med zaposlenimi na vseh hierarhičnih nivojih in težnjo k izboljšanju organizacije dela. Spodbuja in omogoča se strokovno izobraževanje kadra in redno sledenje novim smernicam za izvajanje zdravstvene dejavnosti. Gradimo dobre medsebojne odnose, kot temelj za spoštljiv odnos do pacientov, njihovih svojcev, strokovnjakov v drugih zdravstvenih inštitucijah, dobaviteljev in vseh, s katerimi se prihaja v stik pri opravljanju dela.

Zavedanje, da deluje v soodvisni družbi je spodbuja za celovit pristop, ki dolgoročno prispeva k dodani vrednosti bolnišnice in širše družbe v smislu trajnostnega razvoja.

**Ključne besede:** družbena odgovornost, poslanstvo, javni zavod - bolnišnica, aktivnosti, pristop

## AN APPROACH TO SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACTIVITIES AT THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE INSTITUTION SEŽANA HOSPITAL

**Abstract:** The specialized Hospital of Sežana performs healthcare activity on the secondary level: Specialized hospital activity in the field of treatment and rehabilitation of Chronic Pulmonary patients and internistic medical treatment and rehabilitation of patients in the nursing hospital with rehabilitation and supporting hospital activity. These specialized outpatient activities are carried out: Dialyses, Pulmology, Cardiology, Tireology, Nefrology, General Internistics, Psychiatry, Urology and complex ultrasound diagnostics. The following are also practiced: Physiotherapeutic activity, activity of pharmacies, laboratories and other activities, which are necessary for the functioning of the Sežana Hospital as a whole. The mission of the Sežana Hospital is to satisfy patients and their families, to provide high quality of services, satisfied employees and positive financial management. The hospital strives to have good organization and efficiency of work, to perform nursing care and medical work at

the highest level of professionalism and in compliance with the guidelines that apply in the developed world. Employees are encouraged to use their working time effectively, perform consistent work, and take safety precautions of the patients. The hospital employees strive to perform their best, effectively, in the shortest possible time and in accordance with Slovenian and international quality standards. We cultivate positive organizational culture, quality communication between employees at all hierarchical levels and tend to improve the organization of work. We encourage and enable professional staff education and regular application of new guidelines for the implementation of health activity. We build good interpersonal relations, as the foundation for respectful relations towards the patients, their families, professionals in other healthcare institutions, suppliers, and all with whom we come into contact during work. The awareness of operating in an inter-dependent society is the stimulus for a requisitely holistic approach, which in the long term contributes to the added value of the Hospital and the society at large in terms of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility, mission, Health Institution Hospital, activities, approach, Sežana, Slovenia

**Introduction:** The hospital of Sežana strives towards good organization of work and efficiency performing nursing care and medical work at the highest professional level and in compliance with the guidelines that apply in the developed world. For this reason it is constantly looking for new opportunities for improving the working process for the entire organization to function more effectively, with the objective to focus on good service for users / patients, satisfied employees, and all that we come in contact with the implementation of hospital services. We are committed to increasing the reputation and encouraging greater public trust in the organization, for service users / patients and their families, different expert groups as well as suppliers and business partners. The awareness that the socially responsible approach significantly reduces the social effects of the current economic crisis and can bring benefits in terms of risk management, costs reducing, improving relationships with the users, employee satisfaction and at the same time enables better adaptation to fast changing societal expectations. The European Commission aims to create favorable conditions for sustainable growth, responsible behavior and generation of sustainable jobs. (A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility, page 3-8, COM(2011) 681 final). The Hospital has performed self-analysis of its social responsibility behavior with the aim of finding a solution to correct any poor practices and promotion of good practices. Internal and external evaluation from a number of experts from various fields, could significantly contribute to the guidelines of the introduction and strengthening of social responsible behavior within the company.

## **I. Presentation and organisational management of social responsibility**

In implementation of its activities, Sežana Hospital as a public health institution follows the principles of social responsibility (hereinafter: SR) in compliance with competence (official responsibility), transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for stakeholders' interests, respect for the rule of law, thus complying with applicable laws and regulations, respect for international norms of operation, consideration and recognition of human rights, while observing and following the guidelines of the international standard for social responsibility, ISO 26000.

**The Hospital policy** is to provide professional medical care at the highest professional level, according to the guidelines of the developed world, good organisation with an emphasis on partnership and trust, good interpersonal relations, respectful attitude toward patients and their families and suppliers, further promotion of efficiency, creating an atmosphere that motivates hospital's employees for innovation and creativity, new ideas, efficient use of working time and consistency, according to the standards of quality and patient security. In the

field of **values and culture**, we nurture a positive organisational culture, with attention to communication among employees at all levels of the hierarchy, as well as trained and motivated personnel. We enable professional education, encourage teamwork; we provide a respectful, tolerant and sincere attitude, and cultivate values such as responsibility, partnership, honesty, sincerity, kindness, accuracy and confidentiality. **The mission of our institution** are satisfied patients and their families, the quality of services rendered, satisfied employees and a positive financial performance. **The vision** of our organisation is to maintain the status of a specialist hospital for the treatment of pulmonary diseases, medical rehabilitation of patients with chronic lung diseases, and prolonged treatment with/and rehabilitation and care, specialist outpatient clinic and medical tourism, as well as the construction of a geriatric rehabilitation centre at the secondary level.

Each professional group respects its own code of ethics, and respects the Hospital Code of Ethics “MAVRICA” (*rainbow*), which covers all occupational groups at all levels, and all stakeholders in our business relationship.

In the event of unethical behaviour, we have established reporting mechanisms and measures in relation to patients and their families. A system of complaint and appeal procedures has been established, we have appointed authorised personnel and determined organisational instructions to resolve any issues. The same system has been introduced among occupational groups. Complaint and appeal procedures, actions and a trustee are determined by the Rules of prevention and treatment of mobbing and harassment at the workplace, Code of Ethics (MAVRICA) and the Decree on measures for protecting the worker's dignity at work, which deals with the scope of conduct and risks that may lead to unethical behaviour or criminal offence.

## II. Approach to SR activities

Pursuing its activities, Sežana Hospital implements socially responsible behaviour towards all users of health services in the field of hospital and clinic care. The importance of social responsibility is reflected in the care for relatives of patients, who are an important source of information about the patient, which contribute to quality of life; thus, an extended visitation time has been implemented, each day from 10 AM to 6 PM, which offers more opportunities to inform them of the treatment process and developments. Once a year, a survey on the quality of treatment and care, nutrition and physiotherapy is conducted. Work activities of the staff are well-planned and tailored to the needs of an individual patient, taking into consideration the number of employees and the level of difficulty concerning nursing care and rehabilitation. A well-conceived plan ensures responsible behaviour, accuracy, integrity, reporting of unwanted events, errors and defects, and increased patient safety. Promoting socially responsible behaviour among employees, towards patients and their relatives requires permanent or occasional contacts that are an integral part of formal and informal arrangements in the hospital. The activity requires daily contacts, discussions, negotiations, informing the local community, suppliers, work reports to the general public, as well as reports to journalists about successes, events and problems. At the government and local self-government levels, such an activity encompasses information, written suggestions and initiatives to improve health care services, and a fair business relationship with suppliers. An established assessment system regulates suppliers, their social responsibility, with attention to the priority of health, medical and nursing care.

To establish a system of corporate social responsibility (SR) within the Hospital, a SR task force has been appointed representing an upgrade of the Commission for Quality. This is a new approach to decision making and business activity of the organisation. The Hospital is planning to implement more education courses, as they represent an important element in establishing social responsibility. As an important element in building a socially responsible behaviour towards patients and staff, we have introduced – for example – entry testing of patients for MRSA and an occasional hygiene inspection among employees. This activity prevents the transmission of infections from patient to patient or among employees, which significantly contributes to faster recuperation, eliminates unnecessary patient isolation and additional costs that would be spent on treatment of infected patients. This way, we also get a better overview of transmissions of infections between different providers of health and social care, as well as between patients and staff. In order to raise awareness and prevent hospital infections, we employ regular trainings on hand hygiene as well as routine inspections. Promoting awareness, which consequently contributes to fewer infections, ensures lower costs, helps improve social contacts with other patients, as patients tend to be alone during isolation and completely isolated from other patients for several days. Employees and external stakeholders are encouraged to abide by the SR system, respect the rules, cooperate and integrate SR into the hospital business.

The key objective of the organisation in the field of SR is to prevent negative impact on the social environment, optimise work processes and reduce unnecessary labour and material costs, ensure better organisation of work, and strategically orientate towards a social responsibility. We adopt measures to counteract the negative effects, e.g. routine inspections to avoid errors, harm to patients, employees and hospital assets; and routine checks on handling and management of general and medical waste. We have increased access to outpatient services through the introduction of information services for patients regarding possible medical examination dates, and

about other, quicker possibilities in times of delays. Promoting awareness, which consequently contributes to fewer infections, ensures lower costs, and helps enable earlier social contact between isolated and regular patients.

The Hospital has also transitioned to the use of solar energy for heating sanitary water and cooling facilities. By converting to a different energy source, we are reducing emissions and using more environmentally friendly energy sources (gas, sun). Employees and external stakeholders are encouraged to abide by the SR system, respect the rules, cooperate and integrate SR into the hospital business.

### **III. Cooperation among stakeholders**

In establishing a SR behaviour, the hospital cooperates with its employees, the founder, the payer, the municipality, other healthcare institutions, social institutions, media and non-governmental organisations. In the process of SR identification of the organisation, the hospital attributes an important role to the cooperation with patients and their families in the treatment process to improve work processes and SR behaviour. The latter have a significant impact on our behaviour and attitudes, as they are often extremely sensitive and can be critical towards hospital services performed. The Hospital has a significant impact on the wider community and it allows for better accessibility in the provision of health care services and better equipment. A system has been established for resolving disagreements between employees, superiors and management, and between patients, their relatives and suppliers. Legal bases for resolving such disputes are as follows: Rules of prevention and treatment of mobbing and harassment at the workplace, Decree on measures for protecting the worker's dignity at work, and Patient Rights Act.

### **IV. The central topics of SR in Sežana Hospital**

The main objective in the field of **human rights** is identifying and eliminating all forms of inhuman treatment of employees, patients and their families, and other stakeholders. It is an integral part of all levels of business policy, the culture of the organisation, and SR. Concerning this field, we have designed the document "MAVRICA", which, among other things, lays down the rules of protecting human rights. It includes procedures for instruction on negative impacts, their identification, and implementation of measures to eliminate such negative impacts, and appeal mechanisms. Employees have received the "Rules of prevention and treatment of mobbing and harassment at the workplace". Those working directly with patients were included in the compulsory education entitled "How to recognise and prevent violence in health and social institutions". Patient treatment procedures do not interfere with human rights and personal integrity. The method of treatment and care prevents inconveniences for patients, facilitates peaceful resting, abides by their wishes, maintains cleanliness, suitable temperature and diet, implements longer visiting hours for relatives; patient satisfaction is assessed by a quality survey. Only an authorised person has access to patient medical information. Patients and their relatives are encouraged to report any possible cases of violation of the rights of any stakeholders. Such information is also acquired via comments and complaints book where people can note their observations. All warnings of potentially inadequate treatment of patients and external stakeholders are addressed; by this, we achieved a more respectful attitude, a higher level of tolerance, and fewer complaints regarding work and hospital staff. Inspections of hand hygiene and general cleanliness are part of all processes, as well as education of family members about the importance of disinfection in relation to health. Due to lower threat of infection, the Hospital records higher reputation in the society. In the field of **labour practices**, we strive for an increase in effectiveness of health structures, better cooperation and exchange of knowledge, better networking between professionals, and a more successful development of following the global trends. The employees perform work that is suited to their knowledge and abilities; they must adhere to high standards of work, work processes and clinical pathways; they receive feedback on their work from their working group, their superior and the broader management of the institution. We also introduced annual interviews and a plan of activities for its development. We ensure job positions corresponding to the level of education of individual employees, as well as additional education, etc. Implemented promotions are considered as implemented activities in this area. For employees, recognised to suffer from the 3rd level disability in the previous year, we have adjusted the workplace in such a manner as to achieve performance with no harm to their health. We joined the public works programme, hiring 5 unemployed workers, including them in the process of working with the patients. In the past year, we started taking the first steps to introduce voluntarism; thus we plan to introduce training for volunteers. Due to the nature of the work, employees are encouraged to plan their absence. We provide work conditions that do not jeopardise the health and safety at work. Our employees are properly trained to handle work resources, safety at work and risk factors, which could jeopardise a healthy and safe workplace. High school and college students in

internship or work placement programmes are always provided with appropriately qualified mentors. We are aware that a secure employment significantly affects the quality of the work performed. We put high emphasis on regular payment of salaries as well as all benefits and taxes that we are required to pay. Contracts for service activities are concluded with contractors who are known for their fair business conduct in relation to their respective employees, both in terms of business conditions and payment. Employees' personal information is carefully stored (personal data, personnel folders, payroll and other documentation) and handled in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act. We offer equal opportunities for new employees. All employees are familiar with the Identity Policy and are warned of the risk in relation to suppliers. We strive to develop an organisational culture and to guarantee job security, fixed income, work satisfaction and possibility of promotion. We record higher efficiency, a more open communication and proposals for improvements of work processes and service quality. With this kind of integration of internal and external stakeholders, we ensure mutual trust, proposals for improvements and addressing mistakes. We believe this results in greater job satisfaction, greater cooperation, greater willingness to take on additional obligations or aid a colleague, less sick leave, and – consequently – lower labour costs for temporary employee replacements. Thus, the Hospital is a more reliable partner and guarantees that the services are performed professionally and correctly, that the partners are satisfied, and that the suppliers receive their payment. With the implementation of such activities, we build proper business relationships amongst all stakeholders. The suppliers are familiar with the organisational culture and quality standards. Open communication, kindness, tolerance and a proper business relationship are thus established. The objectives in the field of **environment** include an energy-efficient building and efficient utilisation of energy, favourable living conditions for patients and working environment for employees, compliance with legislation in the field of waste management, as well as a clean environment. The entire hospital facility was renovated in compliance with optimal energy consumption; the investment was concluded in 2013. A permanent objective is to use solar power to heat sanitary water. Further on, the focus exposes the use of biodegradable materials. Implemented SR activities in this field are as follows. We transitioned to energy-saving lighting and implemented the system of switching off electrical devices that bear no harmful consequences by being switched off. In the process of introducing quality standards, we have thoroughly defined work processes, environmental protection, protection against natural disasters or against releases of hazardous waste and pollution into the environment. We established a monitoring system of water management, and an occasional use of conventional energy (gas). In equipment purchases, we give priority to small consumers of electricity or those marked with a high degree of energy conservation. Regular inspections of the water supply network with respect to water quality are carried out to ensure healthy drinking water. In order to avoid the presence of Legionella, we maintain an appropriate water temperature throughout the entire Hospital facility, reducing the possibility of Legionella occurrence to zero. In order to protect Hospital facilities, environment and equipment – also requiring the protection from potential access to water or other materials that fall into the category of hazardous waste – we monitor them by an established system of environmental protection and identification of persons who access hospital premises. We established a system of hospital fire safety in all our facilities, provided training for fire protection and protection from environmentally harmful agents, and carried out a rescue exercise. A programme of prevention and control of nosocomial infections is being conducted according to organisational regulations, which contain a number of instructions for a safe environment for patients and employees. (PCNI: prevention and control of nosocomial infections.) Patients are provided with very favourable living conditions, employees are ensured good working conditions, a high level of awareness in waste separation, as well as maintaining a clean working environment and hospital surroundings. The objective of the implementation of **fair business practices** is to comply with codes of ethics and sustainable development in the area of operation, reflecting in the high-quality services for patients and their families, suppliers, employees, and the wider community, which constitutes a socially responsible behaviour. Furthermore, the objective is to implement a balance between expenditures and revenues, transparent and straightforward operations, and adherence to the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Business decisions are based on consideration of, and respect for, the business ethics principles, with a tendency to offer high-quality services to the patient, based on the financial plan and avoidance of corrupt practices, responsible behaviour and thorough display of the results of professional work. Such performance provides the Hospital with a better reputation and a higher confidence level when entering into business partnerships, as well as in terms of patient care. We present the results of the established system as examples of good practice. In our relationships with the patients and other stakeholders – **consumers** – we have always strived (and will do so in the future) towards the highest professional level of responsiveness to their needs, while managing a fair business policy. Thus, we maintain the Hospital in the local area with specific programs, which signifies a better accessibility for consumers, employment for future generations, and provides an economic social and sustainable development. As an integral part of the daily work process, we cultivate a respectful, honest, professional and ethical relationship with our patients. We perform our work in accordance with the directions arising from daily communication with patients and their families, quality indicators, assessments of quality standards and the bodies of governance. The Council of Experts and the Council of the Institution are regularly briefed on the

objectives of the business-to-consumer relationship. Employees are actively involved in activities conducted to create a system of socially responsible behaviour towards all our stakeholders. We record a higher level of satisfaction with our services, and a quicker resolution of verbal complaints, thus rarely getting written complaints. Written complaints are resolved in accordance with the protocol, we inform all stakeholders about relevant measures; a detected error is immediately eliminated, for which we offer an official apology. Suppliers are treated in the same manner; thus, the communication flows both ways. From our suppliers, we require thorough and credible information about the services they offer, their effects on health, the origin of a product, energy efficiency, instructions on how to use the product and the manner of its usage, serviceability, references, presentation of their product, and we cross examine its use with another stakeholder. Thereby, we provide our patients with quality equipment, reliable diagnostics and better access to services. Since this can be performed in our Hospital, there is no need to travel to distant locations. Because the equipment is of higher quality and a user is properly instructed regarding its use, the procedures take less time. Thus, a patient of a specialist clinic is able to receive their results or a discharge letter on the same day. Our **involvement in the community and its development** is maintained by developing additional programs and health services, greater accessibility of local population to these services, purchasing equipment for the integrated treatment of patients and diagnostics, as well as offering job opportunities. Our set objectives were achieved: on the basis of the results, our hospital is the fastest growing hospital at the secondary level among Slovenian hospitals, and we had approx. 45 job openings. With new projects involving new activities – mainly in the field of specialist outpatient activity and partly also in hospital activity – we increased bed capacity and expanded the specialist outpatient clinic activity. In development projects, we took into account that the hospital mostly provides services for the elderly population, and have thus developed such activities to benefit said population in the greatest possible extent. In its development, the Hospital follows the guidelines of the World Health Organisation and the health strategy of the Republic of Slovenia, where the elderly population is given special attention. We have also followed the initiatives of the local environment, which we also plan to follow in the future, having the support of the local environment. For example, at the initiative of dialysis patients, we built a dialysis centre and optimised the organisation of outpatient specialist activities in such a way, as to ensure shorter waiting periods and to offer treatment of diseases most commonly encountered in elderly population (e.g. pulmonology, radiology, internal medicine, cardiology and psychiatry). We organise preventive campaigns, educational programs, and are currently in preparation of organising voluntarism. In the scope of local community, we work closely with representatives of local authorities, other providers of health care, social activities and associations that devote special attention to the ill, poor and vulnerable. Employees are continually educated and informed on the needs and approaches to particularly vulnerable groups. Our business policy includes the Hospital in the active life of the local community. We present and promote our activities. A successful promotional activity is also represented by our history of charity concerts that attracted several thousand participants. On one hand, this contributed to the promotion of the Hospital, and, on the other, it offered a possibility of obtaining funds for the purchase of equipment, and thus better working conditions for employees and better patient care. Such activities resulted in growing reputation and quality of work of the Hospital, as well as in new programmes, job vacancies, research work, and higher quality care. With its activity, the Hospital significantly contributes to the development of the community (e.g. higher GDP of the community). In this time of serious economic crisis, the Hospital represents one of the major employers of highly skilled labour force in the microenvironment.

#### **V. Voluntary initiatives for SR**

In carrying out its activities, the Hospital follows the instructions of the acquired certificate ISO 9001 Q-1577 and the Healthcare Accreditation Standard of the American Accreditation Council, also following the guidelines of ISO 26000, the international standard for SR, recommendations for action and awareness of their impact on the environment and the society in which it operates.

**VI. Reporting on the SR of the organisation is part of an annual report. At least once a year, the reports are forwarded to the Council of the Institution, Council of Experts, Committee and Commission for Quality and SR of the Hospital.**

#### **Conclusion:**

The self-analysis carried out of SR at our institution, showed us, that we have made significant progress towards SR, and also the external evaluators confirmed with the following: „The integration of social responsibility in the hospital’s services, is increasing the trust and confirming the possibility of maintaining humanness and positive interpersonal relationship which is very important, despite difficult and vulnerable states of the patients?”. Evaluation of SR practices at the hospital showed that it was an important step in the direction of approaching

patients and their families in terms of providing a better relationship and safer treatment, openness in relation to the broader community and building better code of ethics in the hospital and thereby to socially responsible practices. It is our goal to continue with this way of work and develop additional options for patients and their families. In the vision of the hospital in addition to specific business goals we are including objectives about social responsibility.