A clear framework for interactions between employees in the health authorities and suppliers

Updated collaborative agreements between the regional health authorities and suppliers

LMI
LEGEMIDDELINDUSTRIEN
Medisinske fremskritt for bedre helse

MedtekNorge
Norwegian Association for
Health- and Welfare Technology

All four regional health authorities have, as of 1st January 2014, identical collaborative agreements with the suppliers. The agreements apply to all collaboration between the specialist health services and suppliers of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in Norway.

The collaborative agreement with the Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Norway (LMI) was signed by the parties in 2006. An almost identical agreement with Medtek Norway - the Norwegian Trade Association for Health- and Welfare Technology, was signed in 2011. Both agreements were negotiated by the South-Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority.

What do we want to achieve with the agreements?

- To ensure that professionalism and ethics govern all collaboration between health service personnel and the suppliers
- To ensure that trust and credibility is built by the means of ethical interaction, openness and moderation
- To ensure that the patients and the community will be able to trust the independence of health service personnel, their integrity and medical assessments

Collaboration is desired to:

- Ensure the correct use of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and treatment
- Contribute to the development of new and improved pharmaceuticals and medical equipment
- Ensure professional development, proper assessments of medical methods and the best possible patient care

Who is responsible for seeing to that the agreement is adhered to?

- All employees and managers at health authorities and suppliers have a personal responsibility to oversee that the agreement is adhered to. It is a management responsibility to ensure that all employees know of and follow the agreement. The individual employee must familiarise him- or herself with the agreement and follow it.

The agreements apply to all collaboration

- The agreements apply to interaction between employees at the health authorities and suppliers. The agreements do not govern arrangements that are organized by professional organisations such as the Norwegian Medical Association, the Norwegian Nurses Organisation and others. The suppliers are bound by the agreements through their membership at LMI or Medtek Norway.

- The health authorities are also required to apply the terms and conditions of the agreements to suppliers who are not members of LMI or Medtek Norway.

- The agreements apply whether or not invitations are coming from abroad or from the supplier's office in Norway.

- No agreements may be signed that intend to give support to courses that provide course credit in doctors' continuing professional development.

This does not apply to courses that provide qualifications organized by the Norwegian Medical Association, where the supplier may participate as co-organiser in one qualifying course within the speciality during the calendar year.

Four updated points in the agreements

- applies from 1st of January 2014

1) The agreement provides improved opportunities for course collaboration and professional arrangements for competence building.

2) Adaptation of the provision concerning supplier financing of professional meetings and courses. A clarification of current practice is that the health authority covers travel expenses for its employees.

3) Modernisation of a point on research, where previously innovation was not mentioned, as well as clear aims and responsibilities for the parties.

4) There is consense that both the health authorities and the suppliers shall appoint a contact person responsible/contact person for the collaboration agreements.

How should the agreements be practised?

Training shall continue!

- Collaboration on competence building shall be motivated by the need for skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Collaboration on competence building between the health authority and suppliers, shall be transparent and characterised by orderliness and openness.
- All course and travel activities connected to training that the supplier is responsible for, shall be included in purchase agree ments, so that it is in fact the health authority that pays for these. This must be taken into consideration for procurement (signed agreement for deliveries).

All meetings shall be agreed upon

- All meetings shall be agreed upon in advance and be in line with the health authority's scheme of authorisations. The health authorities are responsible for ensuring that those who have authority to approve meetings are available to the suppliers. Unannounced visits to the health authorities shall not take place.
- All invitations to courses and congresses shall be directed to the health authority.
  Participation shall be approved by the managing director or the person delegated this authority.
- The individual employee is responsible for obtaining approval.
- It shall always be apparent from the invitation who the organiser is, and who is paying for the activity.

Health service personnel may hold lectures for suppliers

- Health service personnel may hold lectures for suppliers, but the task shall be approved by the managing director or person delegated this authority.

What rules apply to remuneration?

- Remuneration to employees for work including membership in an advisory board, lectures, consultation activities and so forth shall be approved by the managing director or person delegated this authority.

Service and training are the equipment suppliers' responsibility

(applies to the agreement with Medtek Norway)

The equipment suppliers are responsible for:

- Product training
- Technical service
- Trials and testing
- Service information, daily operation training and handling of medical equipment, service for medical equipment and materials shall take place upon request by the health authority or on the basis of agreements.
- Agreement on service and/or training may be included in the announ cement for the procurement, or by means of separate agreements between the supplier and the health authority. If such an agreement exists, it is assumed that it will not be in conflict with the formulation of the general collaboration agreement, that the health authority itself shall cover expenses in connection with courses and training. This assumes that in the agreement it is specified that the supplier pays for this as part of the delivery.
  This means that in order for all courses and travel activities where the supplier pay for employees at health authorities, this shall be included in the purchasing agreements. This secures that it is actually the health authorities that pay the costs for the health employees. This should be considered in the procurement process.

Trials and testing

Trials on equipment and product testing

(applies to the agreement with Medtek Norway)

- All trials and testing of medical equipment shall take place in accordance with the parties' ethical rules, and be approved in writing by the managing director or the person delegated this authority.

Research and development

- The research and innovation collaboration is intended to utilise skills, knowledge, expertise and resources to increase the quality and patient safety in the health care services, and simultaneously contribute to greater value creation.
- All research collaboration work shall be approved in advance by the managing director or the person delegated this authority.

Persons responsible for the agreements in the health authority and at the suppliers' organisations

A person responsible for the agreements shall be appointed both at the supplier's organisation and in the health authority. Being responsible for the agreements entails:

- Being the point of contact for employees, suppliers and supplier organisations, for questions related to the agreement, inter-pretation at the health authority, the health authority's own routines and so forth.

Being the point of contact for other persons responsible for agreements at other health authorities and at regional health authorities.

- Being responsible for implementation within the health authority.

Being responsible for the agreement at the supplier's organisation entails:

- Being the point of contact for supplier organisations and employees at the supplier's organisation as well as, contact for the person responsible in the health authority, in cases of questions related to the agreement, interpretation at the health authority, the health authority's own routines and so forth.

- Contributing to the dissemination of knowledge about the agreement in own organisation

Background information

Which types of collaboration require written documentation?

- All procurements and other interactions that entail economic transactions
- Collaborative research projects
- Invitations to courses, professional meetings and congresses
- Agreements on training of patients and next of kin
- All other planned collaborative measures

This list is not necessarily exhaustive. If you are in doubt, you should of course choose a written agreement.

Where is there more information available about the agreements?

An information packet is available to employees at the hospitals and at the Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Norway (LMI), and Medtek Norway - the Norwegian Trade Association for Health- and Welfare Technology

This packet contains, among other things:

- The text of the agreements
- An electronic presentation for use by managers
- A brochure of the main points in the agreements (guide)
- Guides for the practice of collaborative agreements § 3.5 and § 3.6
- Guides for collaboration on clinical studies

- Agreement on the use of registration data among the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, Medtek Norway and LMI

Who should be contacted for more information about the agreements?

The health authorities in all four regions and the member companies in LMI and Medtek Norway have their own contact person for the agreements. Contact the postmottak [post reception] for the health authority or supplier. The four regional health authorities, LMI and Medtek Norway also have contact persons for the agreements.

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