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# Innovative Healthcare Strategies

Summary: The 28th Congress of the European Association for Hospital Managers took place on 11 - 14 September 2019, where themes combined innovation and healthcare strategies, focusing on what this means for hospital management. Speaking during the Official Inauguration, Pedro Facon gave insights into what he thinks innovative healthcare means to the healthcare industry.

The congress is all about the strategy for the future. But let us go back in time and visit the Hostal dos Reis Católicos, a Hospital founded at the end of the 15th century in Santiago de Compostela. This was an innovative hostel for the pilgrims who were ahead of the times in many ways, and they experienced some interesting challenges we also face today:

## Challenges and Innovation

- Architecture: The building was innovative in its design, shaped like a cross so, therefore, posed many logistical problems.
- Governance and Management: A sole manager was designated to govern the hospital, independent from clerical or political powers. He had a lot of authority with his own constitution and even with it's own hospital jail at his disposal. Maybe some managers today are secretly dreaming of this kind of authority.
- Financing: The hospital was financed through multiple sources, from the state, over contributions from local farmers and contributions from Granada that had been conquered by Castilia. This complexity and permanent search for new financing sources is a massive topic for modern hospitals globally.
- The hospital was very active in educating its staff and worked with its own medical school.

- They started to develop protocols and norms such as how many nurses needed to be around a bed, how many patients can be in a bed, how often sheets needed to be changed and cleaned, and how much and what nurturing a patient required, etc.
- New roles like administrators, lawyers and accountants were invented in this hostel.

Why am I talking about the past? The fact is hospitals have always faced challenges. Over the last 500 years, a lot of things have changed for the better, but we are still confronted today with a lot of similar problems healthcare professionals faced back then. Ultimately, the type of challenge is not that different.

Today, it is, once again, about redefining the concept and establishing what we are as a hospital. How can we better relate to our patients, other hospitals and other actors in the healthcare, care and wellbeing system? These are some of the key strategies of primary importance that we must develop both in Belgium and globally. It's not only about redefining the concept, but also redefining business processes, taking into account digital and technological advances, in care and in administration and finance. Additionally, it is about re-dynamising governance of the hospitals, partnerships and other facilitators associated with the institutes. There is one main question



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for hospitals: "How will you differentiate yourself?" This question is valid for the hospital sector as a whole in relation to other actors in the healthcare system. But it's also valid for each hospital individually.

Speaking as a representative of "the regulators," I want to stress that we are well aware of all these challenges the hospital sector is facing; moreover, these are the same challenges we are facing as a public administration organisation. Indeed, I am not only a regulator for a series of actors, I am also a manager of 300 people. We all have the same challenges, therefore, we can all learn how to address these problems together by creating partnerships and platforms for exchange of knowledge and learning experiences.

I have no doubt at all that the hospital sector will indeed reinvent itself. It will take some time, but I believe that it will happen.

During EAHM 2019, Dr. Paul Stofels of Johnson and Johnson and Prof. Fidelis Soh, CEO of Tan Tock Seng Hospital put forward some very

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