

## **Aspirational Strategy Steno Health Promotion Centre**

### **Key Challenges and Opportunities**

Three overall issues make up the challenges and the opportunities for the Steno Health Promotion Center:

First, interventions in patient education, prevention and health promotion related to diabetes have only demonstrated limited effects. This is the first and most important challenge for the center, where there is a strong need to develop new and innovative methods aiming at changing diabetes and obesity.

Second, the current explosive increase in the number of people with diabetes worldwide threatens health and quality of life for millions of people. This trend also threatens to overwhelm the health services. This is the second challenge for the center.

Thirdly, the values regarding a user-oriented methodology at Steno Diabetes Centre form a fruitful platform for developing new and effective approaches and methods for changing diabetes, models that may also be applicable to chronic diseases in general. The Steno Health Promotion Centre among others acknowledges the WHO's "Health for All Strategy" as an inspiring platform, it focuses on a user-oriented approach, it aims at setting the highest standards to reach new and challenging goals, it seeks dialogue and collaboration with all stakeholders to reach these goals and it provides a stimulating and challenging place to work thereby attracting the best qualified employees.

Consequently, the following aspiration aims at developing more innovative, participatory, democratic and effective approaches to defeat diabetes and obesity.

### **Aspiration**

The overall vision is to position Steno Health Promotion Centre as an international leading center in Research and Development – a Global Centre of Excellence – in the fields of patient education, prevention and health promotion.

The overall aim is to generate new knowledge, methods and approaches and consequently, different groups of health professionals are considered as the main target groups.

The profile and the aspiration of the center can be described from the following characteristics:

*A. Three focus areas:*

The SHPC generates new knowledge and methods in the following fields, of which each will have its own project portfolio:

- *Patient education*, focusing on strengthening patient's empowerment and competencies to manage their disease and maximise the quality of life. This field will especially be related to health systems such as patient schools, patient care centres, hospitals and other institutions dealing with treatment of diabetes
- *Prevention*, focusing on minimising risk factors for diabetes among people at risk and the general public. The focus will be on risk factors, and the workplace as well as local neighbourhoods will be obvious settings to work with.
- *Health promotion*, focusing on strengthening people's empowerment and competencies to live a healthy life and to avoid getting diabetes. Young people, schools, leisure time institutions and the family will be key settings in this field.

*B. Three criteria for Research and Development:*

As the Steno Health Promoting Center is a research and development centre a number of general criteria dealing with transparency and ethics are obvious and crucial to employ. In addition to this the following three criteria for how to conduct our activities will be in focus:

- *Practice-orientation*: SHPC carries out research and development which is 'practice-oriented'. This orientation towards practice includes two different dimensions. Firstly, the findings and results generated will be of relevance for professionals working with diabetes and with health in more general terms. Second, the main part of the research and the intervention projects at the center will be carried out in close collaboration with professionals working in practice.
- *Interdisciplinarity and openness*: To reach the vision, the SHPC creates interdisciplinary synergy from employing a variety of methodological approaches (from among others the fields of education, epidemiology, design, anthropology, psychology, communication and public health). In addition to the disciplines present among the people employed, the center will also collaborate with a broad variety of external partners coming from other fields. To create synergy the diverse research culture at SHPC will be characterised by openness, curiosity and mutual respect.
- *Collaboration*: To reach the vision of becoming a Global Centre of Excellence, the SHPC engages in collaboration with a number of stakeholders: At the local level (different units at Steno Diabetes Center and Novo Nordisk), with institutions in Denmark and abroad (universities, regions, municipalities, hospitals, ministries, NGO's etc.) as well as with international institutions (WHO, WDF, UN, NGOs etc.). Within a few years SHPC will be coordinating a number of national and international projects involving different national and international partners.

### *C. Five guiding principles for the 'Intervention Approach'*

The knowledge and methods, which are being generated during the research and development activities at SHPC, are based on the following five guiding principles:

- *A positive and a broad concept of health:* To work with a health concept including wellbeing and life quality as well as absence of disease. And to acknowledge that health is influenced by behaviour, lifestyle and living conditions. This holistic concept of health forms the basis for understanding and developing new intervention approaches.
- *Participation and active involvement of the target group:* To focus on participatory approaches, which generate ownership among the target group as a precondition for sustainable change. Furthermore, the participants' concrete action-taking is viewed as a crucial part of the learning process.
- *Empowerment and action competence:* To focus on how individuals and groups gain action competence to manage their own life and influence their living conditions towards the promotion of health. The concepts of action competence and empowerment includes cognitive as well as emotional dimensions, which have to be build up during the learning processes for patients, for employees at a workplace or for young people at a school.
- *A 'settings' perspective:* To take into account that health and the promotion of health are influenced by the individual as well as by social and structural factors – emphasizing the importance of culture and context. This implies going from 'individualisation' towards a social and cultural model of health and health intervention. As an example this indicates a shift from viewing people with diabetes as patients towards seeing them as citizens with adequate needs, wishes and attitudes imbedded in their daily life.
- *Equity in health:* To focus on how methods and educational approaches developed can help to reduce inequality in health – socially and globally.

Together, these five principles mark a new intervention paradigm which will be developed, explored, tested and implemented by the Steno Health Promotion Centre. Based on these guiding principles, the emphasis will be on developing cultural sensitive tools, methods and approaches in close collaboration with local stakeholders.

A business plan and a strategy for the coming years is developed on the basis of the aspiration described above.

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