

## The health, social services and regional government reform is above all a change of practices by means of digitalization

The preparation of the restructuring of social and health care is progressing. Integration of the service chain, better and more functioning services, effectiveness and management of costs have been highlighted at the various stages of restructuring. These factors should also be realized as restructuring processes, and this should be proven true by researchers.

The goal of restructuring social and health care services is to guarantee equal and sufficient services for citizens as prescribed by law. Equal access to services has been questioned in the statements on the draft law as well as in the research in this publication. Therefore special attention should be paid to equal access to services. But this should not mean additional costs paid by the customers themselves e.g. the costs of traveling to reach the services, although the customer has freedom of choice among the services of the public or private sector or services provided by associations. If executed well, the freedom of choice could improve the equal access to services.

A prerequisite for the use of the social and health care services of various providers is that the customer / patient records are up to date and available to all service providers at the right time. The province's joint information system architecture is seen as a core condition for the development of the information flow. However, strong national guidance is required in executing the plans of the overall architecture to achieve action. In the research published in this number it is stated that common data systems in an area can solve the challenges of information flow, but this requires common data content and commitment to the joint operational guidelines in both social and health care. The role of nation-wide services is likely to remain as an archive, where citizens can go and see their own data if the service provider has stored them there.

Harmonization of information systems and the implementation of digitalization within the reform entails significant costs. The costs should be seen as invest-

ments that will pay for themselves and increase effectiveness. The recent dissertation by Johanna Lamminen states that the public sector investment decision process should begin by analyzing the alternative systems and their operating conditions (a technology variable). Three factors that should be paid special attention in the decision making process are standards, system integration, and suitability for the organization's strategy.

Various information systems and the utilization of digitalization enable ubiquitous services. Digitalization offers a new way of producing services. A variety of electronic services can be developed and brought into use. Electronic services can also be used to support the citizen's chances of maintaining their health and functioning ability. Information systems and new electronic services should support both customers and the social and health care professionals as well as possible. Digitalization is a possibility for producing services in new ways as well as enhancing processes.

Standards of customer orientation and knowledge management also entail requirements for developing the client and patient information systems. In addition to the actual customer and patient information, it should be possible to use the information connected to operational control in management. A change in the legislation is under way to enable the use of information for secondary purposes like research and management.

The reform at all events implies first and foremost a change in behavior. Social and health care restructuring is subject to administrative and operational harmonization, as well as changes in the practices of professionals when adopting the most efficient and effective ways of acting. Converting the social and health care services into one functioning entity is a major change and it will take time to translate into practice.

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