

Press release

The lack of healthcare professionals is greater than suspected:

«In 2030, Switzerland will have a shortage of as many health professionals as are currently working in the stationary healthcare sector»

In the next 20 years, Switzerland must recruit up to 190,000 new employees in the healthcare sector.

Shortage of staff in the healthcare sector

Repeated talk of “insufficient staff” and “lack of primary care professionals” quite rightly causes concern. The forecast deficits in healthcare have not yet become apparent, but the latest reports from the Swiss Health Observatory (Obsan) now confirm that, in the medium and long term, Switzerland is certainly going to suffer from a considerable lack of qualified health professionals.

Factors such as the considerable decrease in the number of school-leavers, the increasing amount of part-time work, the large number of vocational drop-outs and double the number of pensioners from 2020 have led Careum to focus in-depth on the question of the “ageing workforce” in the healthcare sector. The Careum working paper “*Ageing Workforce in an Ageing Society*”, which was drafted in close cooperation with Obsan, warns us of the daunting challenge ahead.

Up to 190,000 or more additional healthcare professionals by 2030

Currently there are about 190,000 people working in the three most important sectors of the healthcare industry. It has been clear for some time now that, due to an increasing need for medical care, anywhere between 13% and 25% more personnel would be needed by 2020.

The study “*Ageing Workforce in an Ageing Society*” now shows that, based on even very conservative estimates, between 120,000 and 190,000 additional personnel will be needed in 2030. At least two-thirds of these will be needed to replace staff reaching retirement age. As some of the expected developments have not yet been taken into consideration, the higher of the two figures is more likely to be the required number, possibly even heading towards the 200,000 mark.

The idea of training as many healthcare professionals over the next 20 years as are currently working in the sector represents a major challenge because this requirement is well beyond today’s training capacities.

Careum’s contribution to awareness-raising

The Careum Foundation, which has been engaged in the field of training for the healthcare sector for 130 years, hopes this paper will help to raise the awareness of decision-makers in the medical and training sectors. The study also underlines the relevance of the Careum theses in the recently published Annual Report 2008: there will have to be an incredible effort in training, both in terms of numbers and in terms of content, and the various borders between professions and forms of medical care will have to be overcome if Switzerland is to have top-quality medical care for all its inhabitants in 15-20 years.

The Careum Working Paper 1 “Ageing Workforce in an Ageing Society” is available at www.careum.ch.

Further information:

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