

# Introduction

## The Andalusian Public Health System, a shared space.

The Health System is a fundamental part of any complex, dynamic and ever more profoundly inter-related society. These characteristics indicate that the advances and improvements that we aim for in our health system can only occur within a 'shared space' and require a combined effort from the citizens, who are conscious of and responsible for the value of health and health care and from a collective of highly qualified health professionals who are committed to their mission of health care provision.

This shared space is a reflection of the society it serves and, as a result, continues to grow in complexity and dynamism. For this reason the caring for the elderly or people with chronic illnesses goes beyond what was traditionally considered as health care and involves families and self-help groups as well as organisations from the dependency and social welfare sectors. Health protection and promotion are only possible by means of cross-sector collaboration among different social agents, public administrations, including various Andalusian Regional Ministries and the citizens themselves.

On the other hand, the contribution of the health sector to economic growth and social development is significant due to its capacity to generate health as well as its relative weight in the production system and its attraction potential to important socio-economic sectors.

There exists, therefore, a shared social scenario which is merged and interwoven with the healthcare space. Together these provide the health system with its maximum expression as a generator of health, welfare and development. To obtain the maximum benefit from this complex and irregular environment it is necessary to develop solid, alliances with strategic stakeholders and sectors such as public administrations, universities, enterprise, social agents and citizen groups. From a governance perspective, it is necessary to establish a set of formal and informal networks with organisations with shared values and common objectives.

In the year 2000, the Ministry of Health of the Regional Government of Andalusia initiated its First Quality Plan which was conceived as a strategic model for continuing improvement and as a solid, inalterable commitment to the guarantee of quality in the public health services provided to Andalusians with the vision of making the citizen the focal point of the system.

The First Quality Plan established a basic, long-term strategy for the entire Andalusian Public Health System, incorporating changes based on the continuing re-analysis of all processes and systems. The objective was to provide added value to final patient outcomes, organisational structures, people, technologies and infrastructures. This was a strategic quality model which was clearly oriented towards the citizens of our autonomous community with a view to providing an effective, efficient Public Health System which was sustainable and modern and had the capacity and flexibility required to adapt to the changes of its environment. The First Quality Plan provided a definitive boost for the incorporation of quality policies into the

strategic vision of public health within the framework of the Second Modernisation of Andalusia.

2005 saw the presentation of the Second Quality Plan as a continuation and consolidation of the policies and actions included in the previous Plan. This time, however, a new series of innovative initiatives were incorporated in order to continue the search for excellence in service provision. The objective of the Second Plan was to continue providing both the citizens and the professionals with an appropriate response to their needs and expectations while, at the same time, optimising the established methods for facilitating the generation, collection, management and exchange of knowledge and for the universal development of strategic tools for Clinical Management, Care Pathway-Based Management, Competency Management and Accreditation Models based on self-evaluation and continuing improvement.

The First and Second Quality Plans were top-level strategic references for the Regional Ministry of Health in which the orientation of actions was based on the concept of the

citizen as the fundamental nucleus of the system. This approach to understanding healthcare has been absorbed into the Andalusian Quality Model by increasing the involvement of the professionals in strategy decisions and in their own individual and collective development so that the health system can provide a level of excellence in its services in accordance with its social commitment to the citizen. This road to excellence has required a complex process of profound transformation. Both the role of the citizen and the role of the public health system as the guarantor of the rights of the citizen have changed. There exists today a new perspective of the participative role of the professionals regarding their own development in the search for more unified, responsible and committed professional teams. These have been the central elements that have guided the development of quality strategies over the past ten years. Now is the time to investigate more profoundly, from a new perspective, an organisational model that is capable of maintaining the drive for transformation within a system

which needs to adapt to the changing demands of Andalusian society. Current society requires a healthcare model which favours the maximum decentralisation of the services and a level of autonomy for the professionals at the heart of a more horizontal organisation in which the patients themselves play a more active role by intervening verbally and actively in their own health care and feeling a sense of shared responsibility for the sustainability of the system and for excellence in care provision.

The need for a single, integrated response to the collective requirements of persons and groups remains one of the fundamental defining elements of quality health services. These requirements are in a constant state of change in all the areas of health care provision. The complexity of the health system and the wide range of services it must provide to satisfy patient needs means that the value of healthcare continuity and the integrated vision of care have become increasingly more relevant factors when defining or evaluating the quality of the services we provide.

As a strategic instrument, the Quality Plan increases in scope, strength and depth as it is being implemented and improved. It is a plan which relies on our capacity for innovation as a basis for the continual search for excellence. The long road which we have travelled during the last ten years has had a clear impact on the way things are done within the Andalusian Public Health System and has allowed us to develop a knowledge base which has become an effective point of reference from which to explore the future. This is the context where the evaluation of public policy becomes increasingly important. In 2008, when the proposed validity of the Second Quality Plan was coming to a close, the Regional Ministry of Health suggested an external evaluation of the levels of achievement and development of the Plan. This was a pioneering initiative within the healthcare services in our location and not only has it allowed us to gauge the level of development of the various quality objectives of the Plan, it also allowed us to incorporate future proposals for the continuing improvement of the Andalusian Public Health System.

The external evaluation was coordinated by the Andalusian Society for Healthcare Quality and used qualitative methodologies to perform the evaluation from the perspective of the professionals and the citizens. More than one hundred professionals and citizens' forums took part in a detailed analysis of the implemented developments from the Second Plan.

The results of the evaluation provided us with relevant information regarding the viewpoint of both professionals and citizens in relation to the objectives which were initially set out, while also giving us a fresh outlook for a methodological approach to the design of the quality strategies for the coming years. The contributions and suggestions of both professionals and citizens regarding future challenges were collected using participative methodologies and further enhanced using the information provided by the results of the evaluation prior to the Second Plan.

We are faced with the challenge of shaping what will constitute the strategic vision of quality in the public services during the coming years. We are confident that our solid

background of experience and knowledge, coupled with the guarantee of well-established foundations within the system, provides us with the ideal starting point from which to approach a future full of opportunities. Our wealth of experience allows us to approach the development of the process by identifying what we consider to be the core elements: three scenarios that will provide the basis for the design of the lines of action and will constitute the plan as a whole.

The first of these scenarios is built around the **CITIZENS**. In this scenario, the lines of action take into account the role of the citizens within a health system that considers participation, autonomy in decision-making, diversity and shared responsibility as values which should be an essential part of our organisation and of our society as a whole.

The second scenario is built around the **PROFESSIONALS** as the essential elements in health actions and who facilitate the generation, communication, dissemination and application of knowledge throughout the entire health system; they are responsible for the excellence of a system which provides

an increasingly important contribution to the social development and economic growth of Andalusia.

The third, and final, scenario is the **SHARED SPACE**. This is the space where patients and health professionals converge; the place that is the origin of clinical actions which are based on the relation between teams of healthcare professionals and the citizen with a health-related problem or in need of care. The configuration of this space must reinforce the decision-making capacity of the citizens as well as the role they play regarding their own health problems and their involvement with the health system while, at the same time, favouring the autonomy of the professionals and their commitment to excellence, innovation and public service. Within the Andalusian Public Health System, Clinical Management is the natural scenario in which to develop professional competencies and promote multi-disciplinary, multi-professional team-work and coordination throughout the region by means of a complete restructuring of the system to orient it towards decentralisation and multi-dimensional cooperation in

the form of a distributed services network. It is also a scenario in which we can identify opportunities for convergence and continuity between social and healthcare elements to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided by these relations and to forge solid alliances with strategic sectors and stakeholders to establish a set of formal and informal networks based on the concepts of excellence, shared values and common objectives.

The Quality Plan aims to create an image of the health system as an intelligent system comprised of knowledge-generating organisations integrated into a much more comprehensive paradigm in line with knowledge societies; a health system which is part of an equally intelligent and innovative society that acknowledges the use of science and technology both as a source of welfare and as a means of solving many of its problems.

The aim of this document is to collate the many activities which comprise these three scenarios and establish the roadmap for the quality policy strategies designed by the Mi-

nistry of Health of the Regional Government of Andalusia for the coming years and also to open the necessary channels of communication with society so that society itself, as well as being the beneficiary of the outcomes, also becomes the main protagonist.