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Hamburg Consulting Firm Advises Swiss Clinics

UKE-subsiidiary helps Swiss hospitals to expand and develop.

Germany's neighbors, the Swiss, know the abbreviation of the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf – UKE – very well. This is because its subsidiary UKE Consult und Management (UCM) plays a vital role in the restructuring of the Swiss healthcare system. After receiving a consulting appointment for renewing the Inselspital in Bern with 7,000 employees and more than 220,000 patients around a year ago, four further appointments followed.

“Our advantage is that we are able of much more than only showing colourful pictures. The Inselspital is a real reference project we have. Our experience is directly linked to praxis,” says Dr. Mathias Goyen, UCM's managing director. This resulted in the Hamburger's now also advising the canton hospital in Bruderholz close to Basel as well as three hospitals in the cantons of Aargau – in Aarau, Baden and Muri. The canton hospital Aarau, for instance, suffers from acute shortage of space and needs to be renewed while in operation. A well-known scenario to the Hamburg based consultants.

UCM was founded in 2006 by the UKE in cooperation with the logistics company Hellmann. The company is active in Europe, Arab countries and Russia. In general, the Swiss need to solve similar questions to those the Germans solved in healthcare. It is all about optimizing medical treatment but at the same time keeping medical progress affordable.

Moreover, many assignments include creating a long-term master plan to sketch the future development of the respective hospital. “In these cases we are looking at a variety of factors like demographic and socio-economic development,” says consultant Ruth-Simone Stumpp.

Like Germany did in 2004, Switzerland will adopt flat rates per case (DRGs) until 2012. Both countries spend a similar amount of their GDP for healthcare: 10.7 % in Switzerland and 10.4% in Germany. The average German goes to the doctor 7.5 times per year, the average Swiss only 4.4 times. Switzerland has 3.5 hospital beds per inhabitant while Germany has 5.7 beds. 9.9 nurses take care of every 1,000 inhabitants in Germany – in Switzerland it is 14.9.

Leading a healthy life seems to be easier in the Swiss mountains: Swiss life expectancy is at 79.7 years for men and 84.4 years for women. In Germany it is 75.6 years for men and 81.3 years for women. Only the Japanese have a higher life expectancy than the Swiss.