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Promoting Public Health

Report 1

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As I see the task, we should do a "report" on how Norway are working with the field/s "Promoting Public Health and Combating Addictions". My foundation for this task, is the standpoint that "public health" and health in all and "drug and alcohol addictions" are linked together. This said because these two fields also could be seen separately. Public health has a broad definition in Norway, covering almost all fields of life and the whole life span. E.g. the National Association for Public Health is nowadays mostly focused on dementia and Alzheimer…

Our definition of Public Health:

Public Health – Folkehelse – is the science and art of preventing illness and wounds, prolong lives and promote health through systematic efforts and knowledge based choices by the society, public and voluntary organisations, local communities and individuals.

Responsibilities for (public) health care in Norway:

The public sector is divided in three levels:

The state, which has the overall policy responsibility, by the Ministry of Health and Care Services: The Ministry of Health and Care Services (HOD) is responsible for providing good and equal health and care services for the population of Norway. The ministry directs these services by means of a comprehensive legislation, annual budgetary allocations and through various governmental institutions.

The regions (counties) are responsible for organization and administration of the main hospitals, which is own by the state, where you can be treated for almost any illness. The special health care service is organized by the state.

The municipalities are responsible for local health care, and for the elderly care.

The elderly care is a huge field, as the number of older people are increasing these years and up to 2013 in Norway, and people are getting older and older. The average age for men and women in Norway are now around 80.

https://sml.snl.no/kommunehelsetjeneste.

The primary schools are responsible for e.g. vaccinations of the pupils, which is a huge public health activity.

All citizens are entitled to have their "own" medical doctor – called the **"**fastlegeordning" ("GP" – general practitioner) When you have a medical problem, you should first and foremost contact your local medical service and the medical doctor which is given to you or chosen by you. This system covers all Norway. If your health problem cannot be treated or solved by this doctor, he/she will send you to a medical specialist and/or the hospital.

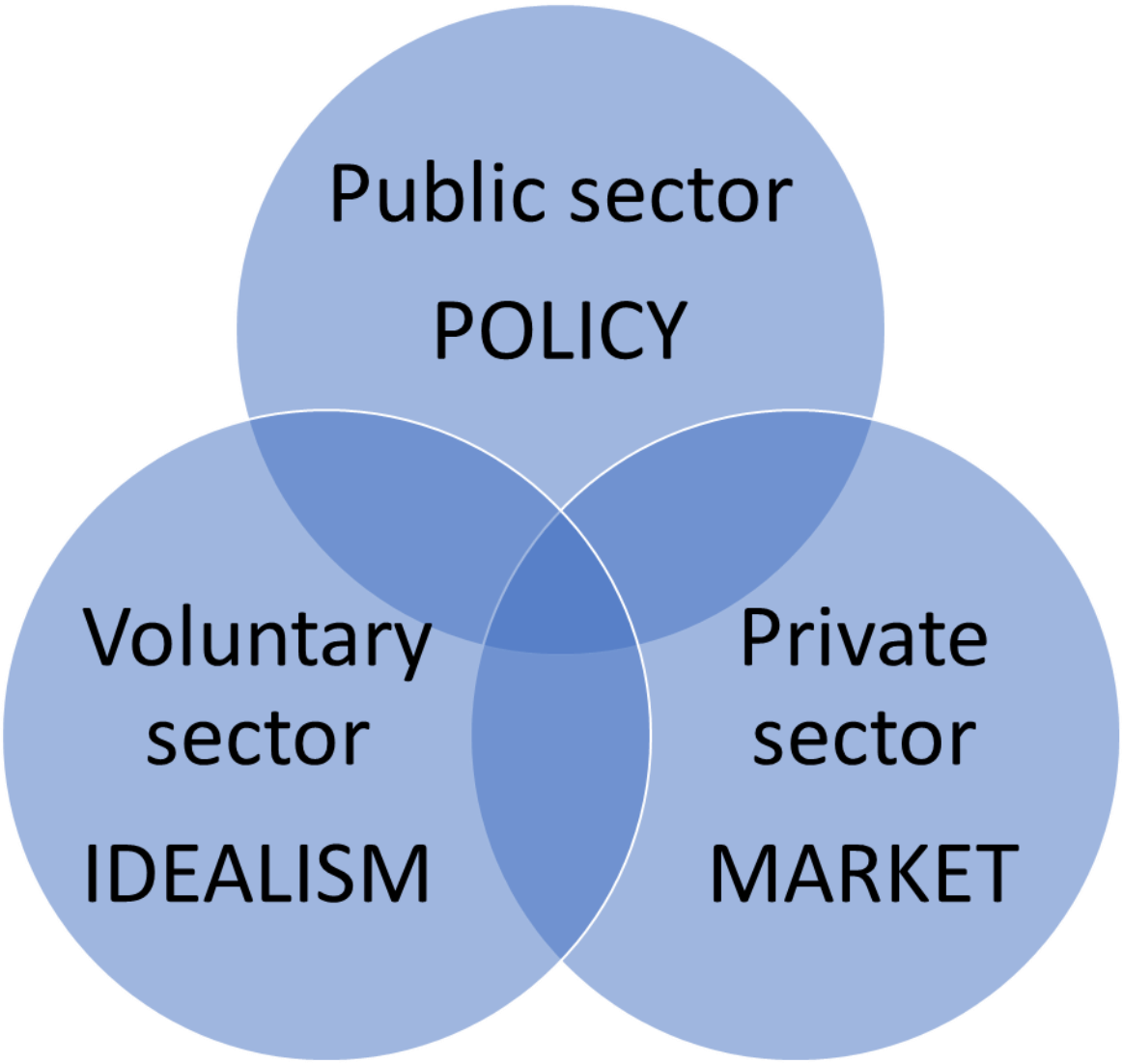
Choose your own hospital. Norway also has a system where you can choose which hospital you will go to. It is up to yourself which hospital you go to when needed. It is your choice. This could be a public or a private hospital.

Public health care is free, or at least quite cheap in Norway. You must to a certain limit pay a low fee for consultations and you should pay for your medicines, but when you reach a certain level of payment, the treatment is free of charge.

At private hospitals, you must pay more, but the waiting time for treatment are normally shorter than at a public hospital.

Public Health is a public responsibility, but in a way, we can say that the responsibilities are shared between the public, private and voluntary sector. See illustration below. The three sectors have overlap, e.g. when private and/or voluntary organisations and institutions are working on behalf of the public sector – by contact.

Shared responsibility for public health in Norway:



The public sector has the overall political responsibility and offers money through the state budgets decided by the Parliament every year. The public sector is responsible for the regional hospitals.

The private sector has doctors and own hospitals which offers treatment for "market prices".

The voluntary sector has NGO's for almost any illness, decease and handicap and takes as such broad but informal responsibility for (public) health care.

Some of the important NGOs are:

The National Association for Public Health

The Association for heart-and lung decease

The Association for the hard of hearing and deaf people

The Association for the Blind

The Association for handicapped

The Association for people with diabetes

In Norway, we find almost 100 different NGOs in this field. Some of them are quite small and covers a "narrow" field of handicap or chronical illness, others have thousands of members and covers a broader field. Most of this NGO/CSO's are member of the umbrella organisation Funksjonshemmedes Fellesorganisasjon www.ffo.no. Most of these organisations also offers courses (adult education and lifelong learning) for members, families and others with interests in their topics. The courses are organized through the Association for Adapted Adult Education Norway. www.funkis.no