

GREEN HOSPITALS AND ECOLOGIC CONTRACTING

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Abstract

Hospitals are “guarantor” structures to health protection, in the provision of acute care according to the clinical needs of the population and in the safeguarding of both individual and public health.

But if they are key point on health protection, they are, simultaneously, in their functioning, creators of hazards and inducers of risks and environmental pressure, agents of pollution that affect the right to protection of the environment and, by harming it, contribute to negative health effects they want to protect. It is known that the environment is an important determinant of health, insofar as its action, upstream, is likely to affect health, both as an individual good and as a collective good.

In 2018, current expenditure on health increased by 5.6%, standing at 19,303.4 million euros (9.4% of Gross Domestic Product). For 2019, an expenditure of 20,302.6 million euros is estimated, representing 9.6% of GDP, which translates into a growth of 5.2% compared to 2018. In 2019 there were 238 hospitals in Portugal.

The number of hospitals, the intensity of their activities, the interference of their functioning in the environment, the consumption of resources that they involve, the products they spend and the waste they generate, lead to the recognition of the importance of adopting preventive instruments that reduce their impact on the environment. Only the adoption of multisectoral public policies that reduce this impact will promote the adequate protection of the environmental rights and a more sustainable development: the innovation in public procurement is one of them.

"Electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) in health" is one of the Priority Working Groups of the National Strategy for Green Public Procurement 2020, which "is based on the European Union list, within the scope of the Green Public Procurement", under the terms of the item d) of 4.2. of the National Strategy for Ecological Public Procurement 2020 (ENCPE 2020) approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers nr. 38/2016, June 8th.

The strategy for renovating existing hospital buildings is recognized and supported by the European Green Deal, as stated in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, in 11.12.2019, «[t]he great importance should also be given to the renovation of schools and hospitals, since the amounts saved thanks to the efficiency of the buildings will be available to support education and public health», in the understanding that the realization of the important social task of health protection can be carried out in a more sustainable and less expensive way, allowing the application of the savings generated in new and more health actions.

For the pursuit of more resilient health systems within a framework of sustainable development and simultaneously within a framework of strengthening the response capacity of health establishments to disaster situations that are deemed necessary, one of the objectives of the European Green Deal is to adapt the housing and buildings for a greener future, and to that end

it establishes an obligation for Member States to renovate at least 3 % of the total surface area of public buildings and sets, for Member States, a new target of reducing energy consumption in the public sector of 1.7% per year.

Alongside the adoption of innovative solutions and with the benefit of science and the application of science to the innovation of materials, the World Health Organization recommends the monitoring and availability of information regarding hospital consumption.

Monitoring consumption and expenditure is already part of the Portuguese national strategy.

The Central Administration of the Health System, I.P. (from now on, ACSS), «has been monitoring consumption and costs with energy, water, and waste production on a quarterly basis since 2011. Based on this work, since 2012 it has prepared, annually, the Ranking of Energy and Water Efficiency of Hospitals in the SNS».

Council of Ministers Resolution No. 104/2020, of 24 November, approved a new resource efficiency program in Public Administration for the period 2030. Following Council of Ministers Resolution no. 104/2020 was determined the new program, ECO@SAÚDE – Environmental Sustainability Program of the Ministry of Health.

Pursuing the objective of green hospitals involves different action plans, namely ecological contracting, social and environmental responsibility.