

## Give patients their surgeries

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**The regional health authorities report record profits at the same time as waiting lists are getting longer. They oppose the political majority by not using the available capacity at private hospitals to reduce queues and waiting times. This should not be the case.**

Public and private health services have used much of their capacity in the face of the pandemic, which has naturally resulted in increased queues and longer waiting times. Private hospitals can and will help public hospitals reduce queues and waiting times.

- Unfortunately, we find that the regional health authorities will not use the capacity we have, despite a clear message from the parliamentary majority to do so, Fagermoen says.

In the wake of Norway being shut down in March 2020, developments have moved in the wrong direction. According to the Norwegian Directorate of Health, more than 100,000 patient appointments have been postponed. At the same time, waiting times have increased from 61 days in the second quarter of 2019 to 68.9 days in the second quarter of 2020. Figures for the third quarter of 2020 have not yet been published, but there is reason to believe that the arrows will continue to point in the wrong direction.

With this as a backdrop, it was gratifying for patients that the Progress Party and the government parties agreed to allocate NOK 6.6 billion in the revised national budget for 2020 to step up the treatment of "ordinary" patients, both in their health trusts and in private hospitals. In the budget settlement for 2021, the same parties agree to be even more precise. They earmarked an allocation of NOK 250 million to purchase services at private hospitals to reduce queues.

- These clear messages have apparently been ignored because we have not noticed a change in demand for our services from the public sector," says Fagermoen.

When the public sector does not use the available capacity in the private sector, it contributes to a two-part health service. Those affected become patients who must wait longer than necessary for treatment. Referred patients are entitled to health care in hospitals, while patients with the willingness and ability to pay can avoid standing in line.

"We want to collaborate with the public sector to help ensure as many people as possible receive treatment without paying for it themselves, says Fagermoen.

The regional health authorities must be given even more precise requirements to quickly find practical solutions that enable the available capacity in the private sector to be used to overcome queues and waiting times.

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"It is time for the Minister of Health and Care Services, Bent Høie, to make it clear that the regional health authorities should give patients their surgeries, even if it takes place in private hospitals, Fagermoen continues.

Private hospitals have the capacity, so patients do not have to wait. Some treatments can also be offered cheaper or with higher quality.

- Mapping which services at private hospitals are strategically correct to use, and not least making sure to use us in these areas, should be a priority in 2021, Fagermoen concludes.

## Contact

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### About Volvat Medical Centre AS

Volvat Medical Centre AS was established in 1985 and is Norway's first privately owned hospital. Today, the Volvat Group is one of the country's leading private health companies for patients across the country.

Volvat has 20 centres located in Oslo, Fredrikstad, Moss, Hamar, Lillehammer, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø. The centres have a wide range of medical services ranging from health-promoting and preventive work to treatment and rehabilitation. Volvat has hospital approval in Oslo, Fredrikstad, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø.

Volvat is owned by Ramsay Health, which also operates large hospitals and medical centres in Sweden, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Australia.

Volvat's quality strategy is based on the group's vision "Always to help", which forms the foundation of the company, rooted in modern medicine and modern management. Volvat is uncompromising when it comes to patient safety, quality of delivery and continuous improvement of all services. Therefore, all clinical departments are ISO-certified according to the quality standard 9001: 2015 and the environmental standard 14001: 2015.

Per Helge Fagermoen is Volvat's Chief Executive Officer.