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Address: 
Einar Gerhardsens Plass 3, Oslo, Norway.
The Ministry of Health and Care Services has the overall responsibility for government policy on health and care services in Norway.

The Minister of Health and Care Services is the head of the Ministry. The minister’s political staff includes state secretaries and a political adviser. The Secretary General holds the overall responsibility for the administrative management of the Ministry, including the Press and Information Unit, the Secretarial Office and the political leadership.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services comprises seven departments:
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Municipal Health Care Services
- Department of Specialist Health Care Services
- Department of Hospital Ownership
- Department of Health Legislation
- Department of Administration
- Department of Budgetary and Financial Affairs

Each of these departments is headed by a director general.
The Ministry of Health and Care Services bears the main responsibility for the provision of adequate and appropriate health and care services for everyone in Norway, irrespective of geographical location and financial circumstances, and the promotion of public health.

Health and care services are regulated by extensive legislation, and government policy is implemented via annual budgetary allocations (approx. NOK 97 billion in 2006), and through government agencies, activities and undertakings. The Ministry’s responsibilities cover a wide range of areas. The central areas are as follows:

Public health is concerned with maintaining good health in the population, reducing the risk of disease and minimising social inequalities in health. The promotion of public health focuses in particular on the prevention of the abuse of tobacco, and promoting physical activity, nutrition and food safety. Other areas are environmental health protection, protection against communicable diseases, radiation protection and associated legislation. The Ministry is also responsible for government policies on alcohol and drug abuse.

Primary health care services in the municipalities are responsible for the provision of adequate and efficient medical treatment where people live. General practitioners constitute a vital component of these services. Others are emergency clinics, medical specialists, mother and child clinics and school health services. Specialist health care services comprise hospitals, outpatient clinics, medical specialists, ambulance services and other services. The five regional health authorities owned by the Norwegian State through the Ministry of Health and Care Services are responsible for specialist health care services. Specialist health care services are provided at hospitals and through medical specialists and clinics in private practice. The regional health authorities are responsible for providing specialist health care services, either through hospitals owned by the regional health authorities (such hospitals are organised as health care trusts) or through a contract with private service providers.

The public dental service is a public service offered to certain groups of the population. The public authorities are responsible for equal access to dental services for all age groups and in all parts of the country.

Support to persons suffering from psychiatric disorders is provided partly through the primary services and partly via the specialist health care services. Help is also available through municipal and voluntary services not included in the regular health care services. Mental health has been a government priority since the end of the 1990s, and is being followed up by the government’s escalation plan for mental health services.

Health care services for drug addicts have recently been developed and organised as a supplement to the health care service. This includes health care services with low-threshold access and rehabilitation supported by medication. The regional health authorities are responsible for providing necessary medical assistance and multidisciplinary specialist treatment for drug addicts.

Medicines must be easily accessible to the population. The Norwegian State provides financial support to patients with medical expenses above a certain limit through the blue prescription system.
Pharmaceutical services are private in Norway. The public health authorities are, however, responsible for ensuring that medical supplies are reliable and safe.

The municipalities are responsible for nursing and care services. The principal user groups are the elderly, persons with reduced functional capacity (mental or physical) and persons addicted to drugs.
Fields of Responsibility:  
- Health promotion and preventive medicine  
- Health surveillance/ health registers  
- Nutrition and food safety  
- Medicines  
- Gene technology  
- Alcohol and drug dependency issues

The main tasks of the Department of Public Health are related to health promotion and preventive medicine, health surveillance and health registers, nutrition and food safety and alcohol and drug addiction issues. Its areas of responsibility include paediatric health care, such as mother and child clinics, the school health service, the prevention of unwanted and unintended pregnancies and abortions, environmental health protection, protection against contagious diseases and the prevention of HIV/AIDS, tobacco prevention and control and measures to promote increased physical activity.

The department has the main responsibility for the government’s food and nutrition policy, including drinking water. The department is also responsible for legislation concerning cosmetics and legislation related to the contained use of genetically modified organisms. Furthermore, the department is responsible for general alcohol and drug policies, interministerial coordination of activities to combat drug abuse and holds a particular responsibility for the prevention of drug addiction. The department is responsible for management and supervision of the production, import and distribution of medicines, with a particular emphasis on legislative and financial measures, including the reimbursement scheme for those with medical expenses above a certain limit, the blue prescription system. Finally, the department is responsible for radiation protection and for preparing contingency plans to ensure nuclear safety.
Fields of responsibility:

- Municipal health care and social services, including nursing and care, health measures relating to drug abuse and mental health care
- The Municipal Health Care Act and the Social Health Care Act
- Dental health care including the Dental Health Care Act
- Health care services for minorities
- Alternative treatment
- Health personnel
- Reimbursement from the Labour and Welfare Service related to medical treatment

This department is responsible for the development of municipal policy measures for municipal health care services, nursing and care services, social care services and mental health care services within the municipalities. The Department of Municipal Health Care Services is also responsible for the implementation of policy measures in areas under the municipal health care services, such as GPs, emergency clinics, physiotherapy and midwife services. Furthermore, the department is responsible for nursing and care services, the dental health care service, the training of health personnel, alternative treatment and health care services for minorities. The department is also responsible for following up financial support systems for nursing and health care services including the share paid by the users. Finally, the department deals with general financial support related to health care services (the Labour and Welfare Service).
The major assignment of this department is to develop and expand specialist health care services. The department has a particular focus on quality and accessibility as well as the consequences of the demographical and medical development in society.

The department is responsible for financing specialist health care services and for the annual allocations over the central government budget to the regional health authorities. Providing satisfactory information about the specialist health care services and implementing legislation are also among this department’s tasks. The department has the main responsibility for specialist health care services for people with psychiatric problems. This includes responsibility for user participation, skills enhancement and judicial issues related to the Mental Health Care Act. Implementation of the escalation plan for mental health care services (1999-2008) is an important task.

The department also holds the overall responsibility for interdisciplinary and specialist care services for drug addicts (under the reform implemented in 2004). These services include rehabilitation based on treatment using substitution medication.

The department is responsible for general habilitation and rehabilitation within the specialist health care services. This includes services for children suffering from chronic diseases and functional disorders. Specialist treatment of victims of violence and trauma is also within the scope of the department. Furthermore, the department is responsible for the approval of public as well as private hospitals and for the distribution of tasks among the regional health authorities.

AGENCIES:

- Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Affairs (including the Norwegian Health Services Research Centre and the Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel)
- Norsk Pasientskadeerstatning (independent national body for patient injury compensation) Patient Injury Compensation Board
- Norwegian Governmental Appeal Board regarding medical treatment abroad
Government hospital ownership of the specialist health care services is divided among five regional health authorities. The Ministry of Health and Care Services is responsible for the administration of State ownership of the regional health authorities, and implementation of this responsibility is the principal task of the Department of Hospital Ownership.

Hospitals and other specialist health care services are organised as independent health trusts under the five regional health authorities. The five regional health authorities have ownership responsibility for the health trusts in their region and they are also responsible for the distribution of health care services in the region. The health trusts are independent legal persons with governing bodies at regional as well as local level.

The Department of Hospital Ownership is responsible for strategic, operational governance of the five regional health authorities through the active exercise of ownership. The department is responsible for preparing meetings with the regional health authorities and for following up management requirements conveyed at these meetings. The department has a particular responsibility for management requirements related to organisational and financial matters and framework conditions.

THE REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES:

• Northern Norway Regional Health Authority
• Central Norway Regional Health Authority
• Western Norway Regional Health Authority
• Southern Norway Regional Health Authority
• Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority
The Department of Health Legislation is responsible for the majority of laws and regulations within the domain of the Ministry of Health and Care Services.

This applies to the Patients’ Rights Act, the Patient Injury Act, the Specialist Health Care Services Act, the Health Authorities and Health Trusts Act, the Alternative Treatment Act, the Mental Health Care Act, the Biobank Act, the Biotechnology Act, the Abortion Act, the Transplantation Act, the Health Services Supervision Act and the Health Personnel Act.

The department’s responsibility for laws and regulations implies developing, updating, renewing and simplifying existing regulations. The Department of Health Legislation also deals with proposed amendments from other ministries or proposals for new laws and regulations.

AGENCIES:

- Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board
The Department of Administration is responsible for joint tasks within the Ministry. These include the Ministry’s internal budget, organisational development, internal planning, issues related to labour legislation, personnel and wage issues, coordination of joint services, information and computer technology and archives. The department also coordinates tasks within the areas of research, emergency preparedness and international cooperation.

Norway is active in a wide range of international health policy fora, for instance international organisations like the WHO, the European Council, the OECD and the Nordic Ministerial Council. Norway also cooperates extensively with the European Union within the framework of the EEA /EFTA Agreements.

The Department of Budgetary and Financial Affairs coordinates the Ministry of Health and Care Services’ work related to the central government budget and is responsible for analyses and reports in connection with various funding and grant schemes.

This department also has the overall responsibility for financial administration within the Ministry, coordination of matters relating to the Office of the Auditor General and general supervision.

The Department of Budgetary and Financial Affairs is divided into the following two sections:

- Budget Section
- Financial Management Section

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES
EIA FHA SHA KTA HRA

Central Norway Regional Health Authority
Northern Norway Regional Health Authority
Southern Norway Regional Health Authority
Western Norway Regional Health Authority
Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority

AS Vinmonopolet

LMD* FKD*

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health
The Norwegian Medicines Agency
The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority
The National Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research
The Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority

The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Welfare
The Patient ombudsman
The Norwegian Health Services Research Centre
The Governmental Authorisation Office for Health Personnel
Task for County Governor given by The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Affairs
The Norwegian Patient Injury Compensation Board
The Norwegian Governmental Appeal Board regarding medical treatment abroad
The Norwegian System of Compensation to Patients
The Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

The National Board of Health
The National Board of Health within the Counties
The National Board for Health Personnel

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health
The Norwegian Medicines Agency
The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority
The National Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research
The Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority

The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Welfare
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The Norwegian System of Compensation to Patients
The Directorate of Labour and Welfare (NAV)

* LMD – The Ministry of Agriculture and Food/FKD – The Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs
The Norwegian Food Safety Authority is a subordinate institution of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, but both the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Care Services execute professional institutional management of parts of its undertaking.

** AID – The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion
The Labour and Welfare Services is a subordinate institution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, but the Ministry of Health and Care Services execute professional institutional management of parts of its undertaking.
The Norwegian Institute of Public Health monitors the health of the population and works to improve general health by focusing on health promotion and the prevention of disease. The institute monitors developments in public health and the somatic, psychiatric and social determinants that influence health. Furthermore, the institute provides information and gives advice on health promotion and the prevention of illness and injury. The institute works with infectious disease control, environmental medicine and epidemiology, and conducts forensic toxicological analyses in order to trace alcohol and other drugs in persons involved in criminal court cases.

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The Norwegian Institute of Public Health is also responsible for the administration of the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety. The committee is professionally independent.

The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Affairs is a professional administrative body within certain areas in the fields of health and social affairs and has legal authority within this field. The Directorate contributes to the implementation of national health- and social policies, and serves as an advisory body to central authorities, municipalities, regional health authorities and voluntary organisations. To develop and advance health promotion and health prevention and improve services available within the field of health and social affairs are essential tasks for the Directorate.

Telephone: +47 810 20 050
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E-mail: postmottak@shdir.no
Internet: www.shdir.no

The Directorate is also responsible for:
• The Norwegian Health Services Research Centre
• The Governmental Authorisation Office for Health Personnel
• Professional responsibility for health- and social services of the County Governors and the County Medical Officers
THE NORWEGIAN BOARD OF HEALTH

The Norwegian Board of Health has the overall responsibility for the supervision of health and social services in Norway. The Norwegian Board of Health shall monitor health and social services to ensure that the needs of the population are met and that services are provided in accordance with professional standards. The Board shall also work to prevent deficiencies in the provision of services. The Norwegian Board of Health in the counties is the government’s regional supervisory authority at county level. It monitors health and social services and all health and social service personnel in the relevant county, and is organised under the county governor’s office.

Tel: +47 21 52 99 00
Fax: +47 21 52 99 99
E-mail: postmottak@helsetilsynet.no
Website: www.helsetilsynet.no

THE NORWEGIAN MEDICINES AGENCY

The Norwegian Medicines Agency is responsible for supervising the production, testing and distribution of medicines. The agency approves medicines and monitors their use and is responsible for ensuring that medicines are used correctly and cost-effectively, by, for example, selecting medicines for inclusion in the government drug reimbursement scheme.

Tel: +47 22 89 77 00
Fax: +47 22 89 77 99
E-mail: post@legemiddelverket.no
Website: www.legemiddelverket.no

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG RESEARCH

The National Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research is an independent research institute. Its purpose is to conduct and communicate the results of research on drugs and alcohol and to provide and disseminate documentation on these issues in order to advance knowledge about drugs and alcohol. The activities of the institute may be divided into five main categories: the drug market; alcohol and drug abuse and drug sub-cultures; consequences of alcohol and drug abuse; preventive measures; medical treatment and social care. Within all these categories there is a particular emphasis on the social science perspective.

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Fax: +47 22 89 77 99/ +47 22 34 04 01
E-mail: sirus@sirus.no
Website: www.sirus.no
THE NORWEGIAN RADIATION PROTECTION AUTHORITY

The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority is the government authority for radiation protection and nuclear safety. The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority is responsible for ensuring the safe use of radiation sources in medicine, manufacturing and research. It is also responsible for the two research reactors at Halden and at Kjeller and for Norway’s emergency preparedness in the event of nuclear accidents and other major nuclear incidents. The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority monitors natural and man-made radiation, advancing knowledge of the occurrence, risk and effects of radiation.

Tel: +47 67 16 25 00
Fax: +47 67 14 74 07
E-mail: postmottak@nrpa.no
Website: www.nrpa.no

THE NORWEGIAN SYSTEM OF COMPENSATION TO PATIENTS

The Norwegian System of Compensation to Patients is an independent national body organised under the Ministry of Health and Care Services, set up to process compensation claims from patients who believe they have suffered an injury as a result of treatment under the Norwegian public health service. Patient injury compensation in Norway applies to injuries that have occurred during medical treatment in public hospitals and outpatient clinics, municipal medical services and emergency clinics, within the public dental service, municipal nursery homes and within health care institutions such as mother and child clinics and centres for rehabilitation. Patient Injury compensation also applies to treatment by private specialist practitioners who have a contract with the public health system.

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Fax: +47 22 99 45 90
E-mail: npepost@npe.no
Website: www.npe.no
THE NORWEGIAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority is the government supervisory body for food safety. The authority promotes plant, fish, animal and human health and supervises food “from the farm to the fork”, from the fishing boat and the farmer, via abattoirs, dairies and importing agencies to groceries and restaurants. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for the institutional management of the Food Safety Authority. The Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs are responsible for management within their respective areas.

Tel: +47 23 21 68 00
Fax: +47 23 21 68 01
E-mail: postmottak@mattilsynet.no
Website: www.mattilsynet.no
A green number telephone service - 06040 - is available in Norway.

THE NORWEGIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR FOOD SAFETY

The Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety was established by the Ministry of Health on 1 April 2004 when the administration of food safety in Norway was reorganised. The Committee’s main task is to conduct risk assessments for the Norwegian Food Safety Authority of factors that have a direct or indirect influence on food safety throughout the food chain, “from the farm to the fork”. In order to ensure the Committee’s impartiality, it is organised independently of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority.

Tel: +47 21 62 28 00
Fax: +47 21 62 28 01
Website: www.vkm.no

THE LABOUR AND WELFARE SERVICE

The Labour and Welfare Service is responsible for safeguarding people’s rights under the social security insurance and benefit schemes. The Labour and Welfare Service administers the National Insurance Act and other regulations concerning social security insurance and benefits. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion is responsible for the institutional management of the Labour and Welfare Service and the Ministry of Health and Care Services is responsible for institutional management within its areas of jurisdiction.

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REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Northern Norway Regional Health Authority
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E-mail: postmottak@helse-nord.no
Website: www.helse-nord.no

Central Norway Regional Health Authority
Postal address: PO Box 464, N-7501 Stjørdal
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Fax: +47 74 83 99 01
E-mail: postmottak@helse-midt.no
Website: www.helse-midt.no

Western Norway Regional Health Authority
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Fax: +47 51 96 38 01
E-mail: helse@helse-vest.no
Website: www.helse-vest.no

Southern Norway Regional Health Authority
Postal address: PO Box 2825, Kjørbekk, N-3702 Skien
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Fax: +47 35 91 26 01
E-mail: post@helse-sor.no
Website: www.helse-sor.no

Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority
Postal address: PO Box 404, N-Hamar
Tel: +47 62 58 55 00
Fax: +47 62 58 55 01
E-mail: postmottak@helse-ost.no
Website: www.helse-ost.no

AS VINMONOPOLET (NORWEGIAN WINES AND SPIRITS RETAIL MONOPOLY)

AS Vinmonopolet has the exclusive right to sell wine, spirits and strong beer containing more than 4.7% alcohol. The aim of the enterprise is to regulate the consumption of alcohol and thus minimise its harmful effects by controlling trade and excluding private commercial interests.

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Fax: +47 22 01 51 90
E-mail: kundesenter@vinmonopolet.no
Website: www.vinmonopolet.no
The Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board
The Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board is an independent advisory body, and its task is to evaluate the social and ethical consequences of modern biotechnology and gene technology. The Biotechnology Advisory Board is a consultation body for the Norwegian authorities on issues related to modern biotechnology and gene technology. The Biotechnology Advisory Board places strong emphasis on information and debate, distributing relevant information to the general public and facilitating communication between public authorities, professionals and pertinent organisations.

Tel: +47 22 24 87 91
Fax: +47 22 24 27 45
E-mail: bion@bion.no
Website: www.bion.no

The Patient Injury Compensation Board
The Patient Injury Compensation Board deals with appeals against individual decisions made by Norsk Pasientskadeerstatning (NPE), as laid down in the Patient Injury Act. The board consists of a chairperson and a deputy chairperson, medical and legal experts and user representatives.

Tel: +47 22 99 36 30
Fax: +47 22 99 36 36
E-mail: post@pasientskaladememnda.no
Website: www.pasientskaladememnda.no

The Norwegian Appeals Board for Health Personnel
The Norwegian Appeals Board for Health Personnel is an independent appeals body for health personnel appealing against decisions to reject applications for authorisation and licence made by the Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel. The board also deals with appeals against decisions to suspend or revoke authorisations or licenses made by the Norwegian Board of Health, and decisions on the authorisation of specialists made by the Norwegian Medical Association, the Norwegian Dental Association and the Norwegian Opticians Association. The board safeguards the legal rights of health personnel.

The board also deals with appeals against decisions made by the Norwegian Medicines Agency pursuant to the Pharmacy Act.

Tel: +47 24 10 13 00
Fax: +47 24 10 13 01
E-mail: postmottak@helsenemnda.no
Website: www.helsenemnda.no

The Norwegian Governmental Appeal Board regarding medical treatment abroad
The Appeal Board processes appeals against decisions made pursuant to the Patients’ Rights Act concerning medical treatment abroad in cases where the required medical treatment is not available in Norway. The board also deals with exemptions from the provision in the Biotechnology Act specifying that genetic testing of fertilised eggs may only be carried out in cases of serious hereditary diseases. The board is a free and independent legal body with authority similar to that of a legal court and it cannot be instructed by the Ministry. The decisions of the Appeal Board are final, but may, however, be referred to the regular courts.

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