

Assistència Sanitària and the University of Barcelona sign strategic cooperation agreement

The medical insurer has increased the budget for the second round of its Bursaries Programme

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The cooperation agreement signed recently between Assistència Sanitària and the University of Barcelona (UB) will serve to promote joint academic and research relationships, the aim being to exchange knowledge and skills for the professional development of doctors and nurses, while offering patients an improved service.

Meanwhile, the Assistència Sanitària Bursaries Programme, now in its second year, has seen the funds available to students increased, along with an expansion of the educational programme on offer.

The President of Assistència Sanitària, Dr. Ignacio Orce, and the Rector of the University of Barcelona, Dídac Ramírez, signed a strategic cooperation agreement setting out the desire of both institutions to forge closer ties and to work together in the field of education, training and the involvement of health professionals. Taking advantage of the two institutions' synergies, the plan aims to integrate health care activities with teaching and research, creating a vehicle to achieve excellence in the Catalan health care system. In specific terms the project will focus on initiatives connected with the neonatal and paediatric areas, assisted reproduction techniques, the management of health care institutions and organisations, molecular bio-pathology and public-private health partnerships.

The agreement also provides the framework for the second round of the Assistència Sanitària Bursaries

Programme, benefiting students undertaking doctorates in health-related studies with the aim of improving their professional qualifications and giving them a route into the professional world. With a budget of 30,000 euros, the grants cover 50% of the cost of enrolling on a master's or postgraduate course (more than 200 official and independent university qualifications are included), and are available to doctors and nurses following courses of study over the 2009-2010 academic year. With the aim of supporting medical professionals and playing a role in the constant update of their knowledge, the Bursaries Programme focuses on doctoral studies, giving an almost immediate impact on professional practice, with a particular emphasis on nursing in recognition of its essential role in the proper functioning of a health care system.

Aside from these study grants, Assistència Sanitària will also be working with the UB on the deliv-

ery of master's and doctorate programmes, postgraduate courses and research, promoting exchanges between students and tutors to enrich their knowledge and skills. There are also plans for other joint actions involving debates and the exchange of experiences, such as the sharing of information about research issues, publications, seminars, public events, presentations, congresses and educational materials.

Assistència Sanitària is an exponent of healthcare co-operativism, the distinct self-management model devised by Dr. Josep Espriu some fifty years ago, based on equality of doctors and users on decision-making and management bodies. The organisation now has some 20,000 policyholders who can call on the services of a list of more than 4,000 doctors. It is also the official medical service provider of Barcelona Football Club and the Andorran Social Security Service.



Dr. Orce and Rector Ramírez, at the signing of the agreement