

**Title: To build a county-wide hospital-library**

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*Description of how the creation and building of a hospital-library organization plays a regional role in creating sustainable growth and may stimulate the development of quality and evidence-based health care.*

**Background:**

In autumn 2006, the Sörmland County Council in central Sweden made a strategic decision. The County of Sörmland with 265,000 inhabitants borders to the country's largest County, Stockholm, with eight times as many inhabitants. Depopulation and people commuting to the capital, is resulting in a region with educational attainment well below the national average. The Sörmland County Council, responsible for the region's health care, registered the impact this had on the residents. As part of creating a sustainable regional growth and stimulating the development of a high quality health care, a comprehensive resource centre for research and knowledge development, a R & D Centre, was established three years ago. The vision of the Centre was to stimulate the clinical, patient-oriented research relevant to health care and its development. To this organization the County's four hospital libraries were added and merged into a single activity. A new mission was formulated, which focused on the libraries role of being a resource for the 7,500 county employees in their search for information and literature for clinical work, education and research.

**The present and the past**

The first major project for the hospital libraries was to create a functioning infrastructure. Three separate catalogues were replaced by one common in April, 2009. This work was preceded by many intense, business-important discussions on acquisition, weeding, cataloguing, and customer-treatment. Parallel to this, the four websites became one. A common phone-number and a common email-address were established. The aim was to offer an equal service in all libraries.

During the next few years, the outreach activities will have priority. A special effort to intensify contacts with clinics and health Centres has been made. Each semester, the Library Staff visits staff meetings to inform and educate on library resources. The response has been tremendous. Longer training sessions have been extended in time and adapted to the requirements. In conjunction with the libraries special computer-equipped study-places have been created, which employees can use around-the-clock, regardless of library opening hours.

The Library Staff competence has been strengthened through targeted training. One of the librarians is now pursuing her own research project, funded by external research funding. The project evaluates the response of the hospital libraries in clinical situations. Further research is on its way.

The hospital library activities should be conducted in close cooperation with other actors in the health care process. Being part of the R & D Centre means that librarians, together with supervisors and statisticians, are involved early in the research process. The Hospital Libraries in Sörmland have also been active in issues regarding national e-licenses and in the establishment of a network of Swedish hospital library managers. In winter 2010 Sörmland will organize a national conference for hospital libraries.

