

11 May 2016

**University medicine needs better conditions
Integral part of universities**

"University medicine is the most important driver of medical advancements in Germany. Everyone must have an interest in ensuring that research, teaching and healthcare provision at university hospitals can take place under the best possible conditions. However, at the moment we are still far from achieving this," said Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), following the HRK General Meeting in Berlin yesterday.

In a resolution, the meeting warns of the consequences of the continuing underfunding of universities and university hospitals and pointed to the inadequate attractiveness of a research career for young medical graduates. At the same time it outlines how universities, faculties and hospitals can function within a framework of shared responsibility.

"The role of university medicine is a complex one. It is at the very core of health research and has responsibility for the training of early career researchers. At the same time it represents a key area of healthcare provision in Germany and implements innovative therapies," said Prof. Dr. Johanna Weber, HRK Vice-President for Medical Institutions and Health. "The capabilities and international competitiveness of university medicine depend on a whole network of political, legal and financial factors."

The financial situation of university hospitals has drastically deteriorated in recent years, she said. "The particular tasks and costs of university hospitals are not taken into account in the current system of case-based flat rates for patient care. In most university hospitals, this results in significant deficits."

HRK President Hippler said: "In recent years this has led to a gradual cross-subsidisation of healthcare by universities, to the detriment of teaching and research. At the same time, investment is significantly lagging behind requirements. Many buildings are no longer suitable for modern medical research due to their age and condition."

The HRK wants to see much better conditions for early career researchers, including performance incentives and transparent career paths. It also believes that defined scopes are needed for research activities.

With respect to governance structures, the HRK General Meeting is calling for joint, coordinated structural and development planning by universities, faculties and hospitals.

View text of the resolution