Building the future of health 2020
Preface

Dear colleagues, staff of UMCG,

We present to you our updated ‘tack’. It describes what we work for at UMCG, what our values are, why we do what we do and what our focal points are for the next few years.

It is the tack we sail together, because it is the result of talks and online discussions with people in all parts of the organization. Two things feature most prominently in all of these talks and discussions. First of all: our patients. Whatever we are working on, we need to look at and listen to the person. We need to listen to his story and factor in his needs.

Secondly: we are all about Healthy Ageing. Both in terms of research, where many successes have already been achieved, but also in the care we give to patients and staff alike. Healthcare, to us, is not just about healing; it is also about contributing to a healthy and active lifestyle for the ageing person. In the next few years we will be taking considerable leaps in this particular area. We will be translating our research results into practical applications in healthcare, and we will actively encourage our staff to be healthy at work.

It is our hope that ‘Building the future of health 2020’ will inspire you in your work at UMCG, so that your patients, colleagues and others will really feel what the UMCG philosophy is all about.

The Board of Directors,

Jos Aartsen
Folkert Kuipers
Henk Snapper
Ate van der Zee
Our mission

Building the future of health
We are the University Medical Center Groningen. Together we are building the future of health. This we do in our patient care, scientific research, education and in medical and nursing training programs. In all of these core tasks, we want to excel and innovate, because we know we can be even better. And every day offers opportunities to show just that.

Our three starting points speak for themselves:

The patient as a person is leading.
We want people to be as healthy as they possibly can be. Both now and in the future. Everything we do contributes to this, even if we work together with others, e.g. with regional healthcare organizations.

We are pioneers in research.
Our scientific research results in new knowledge about health, prevention, disease and treatments. We use this knowledge for our innovations: practical improvements in healthcare. All our patients benefit from this. That is why we want to be among the best (bio)medical knowledge institutes in the world.

We share our knowledge in the North of the Netherlands and across the globe.
Our knowledge belongs to everyone. We share new insights with others and help them apply them in practice. Our education is also based on this innovation. This benefits our patients in the North of the Netherlands and elsewhere. This is why we participate in many (inter)national networks and joint ventures for all our core tasks.

HEALTHY AGEING: HOW DO YOU DO IT?
Parents pass on their genes to their child. This inherited package of genes determines in part the course of our life and the risk of developing disease, as do factors such as lifestyle, dietary patterns, the amount of exercise and the use of medication. It is not at all clear yet how all of these factors interact, why do some develop diseases, while others stay healthy? To answer this question we need new knowledge. UMCG scientists contribute to generating this fundamentally new knowledge.
Our vision

There are two driving forces behind our work.

From person to person, in everything we do
We work for people and with people, in everything we do: in our patient care, research, education and training.

We all devote our best efforts to the health and wellbeing of people. Their best interest is leading in everything we do. We never lose sight of it and listen to what patients tell us, because many patients know what is working and what could be improved. What patients have been through is important to us. This is how we provide care at UMCG, as well as throughout the healthcare chain with other healthcare providers.

Healthy Ageing
We want to help people stay healthy and active for a longer part of their lives. Healthy Ageing is our shared focus.

At UMCG we do more for our patients than just offer the classic approach of treatment and cure. We also look at prevention, the causes of ageing and we educate people about health, prevention and quality of life. As personnel, we are ‘healthy at work’. Not just where our own health is concerned, but also to set an example for patients and people who visit UMCG.
People are living longer. UMCG contributes to this with innovative therapies. We are proud of this. Older people, however, often spend more years suffering from one or more chronic diseases and hence are sick. In the classic definition health is ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (World Health Organisation). UMCG thinks this definition is too idealistic and very much focused on disease. What is more important is ‘for people to remain in charge of their own lives, even if they suffer from one or more chronic diseases’. If this is the tack you choose, you will arrive at new insights.

Why does someone remain healthy? Why does someone fall ill? Part of the questions surrounding Healthy Ageing can be answered through fundamental research. Over the past few years, UMCG has been making considerable investments in LifeLines, ERIBA and other special research lines that help us understand ageing and the origins of chronic disease, supported by investments made by governmental institutions and private organizations. Currently, we distinguish ourselves (inter-) nationally by our research in this field. The EU recognized the North of the Netherlands as a best practice region for Healthy Ageing.

So far, research has taught us two fundamental things:

- In our thinking about healthy and active ageing, we must focus on the life cycle of the individual.
- In addition to primary prevention (of disease) we need to pay attention to secondary prevention (staying in the best possible health after the disease has been treated) as well as to tertiary prevention (ensuring that people can live in their own environment for as long as possible, and as long as this is safe).
Our region

Our region – the entire North of the Netherlands – has relatively many (chronic) old age-related diseases. With our focus on Healthy Ageing, we are for 3.5 million residents:

• the hospital for complex care and complex patients
• the academic center for research
• the organization for scientific research and education in medical science, dentistry and human movement sciences;
• the partner in networks of fellow healthcare institutions, primary care providers (PCPs) and other health care providers, as well as private institutions, focused on quality and continuity of care.

Treatment takes place at UMCG if necessary, but elsewhere if possible. The main question is: what is needed to ensure that someone stays in charge of their own life? And: how do we organize this? This involves many primary healthcare providers and local governmental bodies.
Our values

We want to successfully build the future of healthcare. This does not just place demands on what we do at UMCG, but also on how we do it, in other words: our culture.

Our main values are:

**Dedicated**

We are focused on our own work but with a broad perspective: we think about ways to collaborate with others and look for ways to contribute to patient satisfaction, Healthy Ageing and quality and safety. Moreover, we consider the social context of our work. Our common interest – often the wellbeing of the patient – prevails over our personal interest.

**Respectful**

We accept others the way they are and show respect for their opinions, rights and property. When we work in teams we are all equal, work on the basis of trust and respect each other’s contribution and expertise. This is how we complement each other and how we achieve the best results.

**Reliable**

We work with public means. This is why we think it is important to always be able to account for our results, both to the government and to other parties, e.g. patients (or patient associations). We do this by being transparent, about our finances as well as other operational aspects, such as our performance in terms of quality and safety, information technology and patient satisfaction. This way, both the world at large and we ourselves will be able to see our strengths and the things that we can improve. This is how we continue to make UMCG better.

Needless to say we honor our commitments: to each other and to our patients, students and external partners and relations.
Our ambitions

We set an example for others with our quality of care and patient safety. This results from a high level of involvement between our professionals and our patients.

Our quality care and patient safety have already been raised to a higher level. By the end of 2014 UMCG will be integrally ISO-certified. This means we are at the forefront in the Netherlands as a healthcare and knowledge institution. Our data protection policies were approved by the Health Care Inspectorate. In a comparative study into patient experience in all Dutch UMCs we scored an ample 8 on a 10-point scale.

For the near future the bar is still raised high. In the area of quality and safety we want to set an example. This is only possible if we continue to learn and improve. In view of the clinical governance principles all staff is involved in quality and safety.

We inspire people to form networks of healthcare providers in the North of the Netherlands. These networks focus on the preservation of a complete package of healthcare in our region, which meets all requirements in terms of quality and operational continuity.

Many of the hospitals in our area are not able or permitted to provide all therapies. This is a result of volume and quality requirements defined by the government and insurance companies. We want every patient to continue to receive the right care in the right place. For this reason, the healthcare institutions in the North of the Netherlands will be joining forces more intensely. At UMCG we see it as our task to inspire this process, to make knowledge available and to coordinate whenever necessary.

Regional collaboration means making choices. UMCG opts for top referral care, complex care and complex patients. In close consultation, we will transfer part of our basic care to hospitals in the region, while making arrangements for tasks related to basic care, such as education and training.
The collaboration in the region offers opportunities for innovation, e.g. in the area of quality and efficiency, healthcare concepts, methods of treatment, training and education. Here again, we want to encourage and inspire. For example: with respect to the postgraduate medical (specialist) training programs we work in close collaboration with non-academic teaching hospitals. Together we shape the track from freshman medical student to medical specialist. With our contribution we want to increase the efficiency of the educational program.

**JOINING FORCES IN THE REGION**

Over the past few years, many collaborative projects have been set up in the region with different hospitals. For complex care we work together in so called managed clinical networks, we are setting up dedicated outpatients’ clinics and 1.5-line healthcare centers, while in the first line (e.g. General Practitioners, GP services) we work together in aftercare and in the supporting specialties.

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**EXCHANGING INFORMATION**

The concentration and distribution of care throughout the North of the Netherlands results in patients being seen by various healthcare professionals from various institutions. This calls for a good exchange of information between these institutions. Such exchange of information is already possible for radiological imaging.

We organize healthcare around patient groups as much as possible.

During the entire journey from intake, diagnostics, treatment to aftercare – the patient encounters a variety of medical disciplines. At UMCG we organize this healthcare journey in such a way that patients experience integral care.

We want to offer the best medical treatment. We also want our patients to appreciate us because we organize the entire healthcare process ‘around them’. This is why we ask our professionals to look past the traditional limits of the ward and the organization more often.
Future innovations often arise from combining knowledge from various scientific domains. This is why we continue to focus strongly on regional and (inter)national collaboration. It is the only way to achieve even more excellent research.

**TOP RESEARCH**

Top research is performed by top researchers. They come to UMCG from all over the world because of our excellent research facilities, the inspiring research environment and our evident focus. We have extensive research programs within our Graduate School of Medical Sciences. The UMCG tenure track policy allows young researchers to shape their career within UMCG. This is how we train fundamental and clinical researchers to become the top researchers of the future.

**PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE AND SOCIETAL IMPACT**

Over the past few years we have succeeded in translating our knowledge into socially relevant applications in various public-private partnerships. Our research increasingly leads to the establishment of spin-off businesses, which in turn lead to an additional economic impulse for the region.

We hold an international top position in scientific research: in medicine, dentistry and human movement sciences.

We are a global player in the field of research and we want to grow even more. Together with RUG we have become one of the best (bio)medical knowledge institutes in the world. The entire chain is crucial to build a position like that. From basic/fundamental research (laboratory) via translational research (from laboratory to patient) to clinical research (patient) and top referral care. In the near future we will strengthen this chain by further anchoring Healthy Ageing in our thirty-three interdisciplinary research programs.

From 2015 onwards we will be using a new model for internal management. This allows for a strong patient-directed focus in healthcare and logistics. In addition, we encourage initiatives for collaboration concerning patient groups. People from different disciplines should know what the other disciplines are doing, by engaging in conversation and by learning from each other.
Our English-language educational programs attract foreign students. We facilitate our PhD students and researchers in sharing and exchanging knowledge. Summer schools are given a research focus in order to introduce foreign students to our research Masters and our many PhD programs which are embedded in the Graduate School of Medical Sciences (GSMS).

**PARTNERSHIPS**

We have had partnerships for a long time, of course: with other faculties at RUG, with other domestic and foreign knowledge institutions. We have entered into partnerships with a select number of top universities in Europe, China and North and South America and we have initiated a center for stem cell biology in Skolkovo (Russia). We have also been building close relationships with German universities. In addition, we greatly value our collaboration with research programs in the region. In the North of the Netherlands, for instance, we are involved in translating research into practical applications and we have a close working relationship with Twente University and the University and Research Center of Wageningen.

**INNOVATIVE EDUCATION**

G2020 is a new medicine curriculum where the education takes place within 4 learning communities of students and tutors, each of which with a distinct profile: global health, molecular medicine, sustainable healthcare and intramural healthcare. Academic education and deepening of knowledge happen within the context of each profile. Students choose a particular profile, and they tend to be very motivated for their studies and future profession. In G2020 tutors are called on in their role of experts.
We translate the yield of fundamental Healthy Ageing research via translational and clinical research to actual practices within the region and in clinics.

Old age-related disease can be pushed back by translating the results of our research in the area of Healthy Ageing to practical situations. Here we reap the benefits of our years of dedication: experts in our region help set the European agenda and ensure that Healthy Ageing is and remains an important point on this agenda. This gives UMCG even more opportunity for translating research outcomes into practical applications. We regard this as part of our social task.

Treatment is not our only focus, prevention is too, because we want to contribute to healthy and active ageing, even after an illness.

Our focus on Healthy Ageing implies that the prevention of health issues gets the same priority as the healing of disease. In our clinic we therefore focus on prevention and giving information as well. Naturally, Healthy Ageing is also included in our education and training programs, e.g. in our new Master program Human Movement Sciences. It contributes to our aim of applying knowledge for social health issues.

We will move from customized care to personalized medicine.

Research teaches us about more detailed differences between people: the differences in lifestyle and circumstances, and the differences in conditions. No two tumors are exactly alike. This knowledge paves the way to tailored prevention, down to individualized therapies (especially design medication), adequate psycho-social support and personalized information. Personalized medicine potentially has enormous added value for the top referral care, complex care and complex patients that UMCG has chosen to focus on.
THREE PILLARS OF RESEARCH

The past few years a lot has happened at UMCG in the field of Healthy Ageing, especially in terms of research. We are extremely proud of the success of the three main pillars:

**LifeLines.**
A large-scale study in which we follow 165,000 participants from three generations. In the study we look at a great variety of life aspects, including genetics, lifestyle, psychological and social factors. This broad approach offers profound insight into the impact of genetics and a person’s environment on their health of ageing. LifeLines is unique in the world.

**The European Institute for the Biology of Ageing (ERIBA).**
ERIBA is unique in the Netherlands and in the rest of the world there are few institutes like it. Eleven top research groups perform fundamental research into the process of ageing and the diseases that arise during this process. This fundamental research constitutes the basis for new therapies and (preventative) measures that contribute to healthy ageing.

**Our translational and clinical scientific research** is among the top fifty programs of the world. We have specialized in research into chronic disease, cancer and transplantation medicine. The next few years we will focus this research on age and complexity of the disease. This is done in our GERAS project. This way we involve lifecycle medicine in our research as well. We translate this research into the treatment of patients.
Objectives for the next few years

We will be realizing Comprehensive Centers for Oncology and Transplantation Medicine and, in time, for Acute Care (care, research and education).

Each Comprehensive Center will be embedded in the organization of UMCG: in addition to providing healthcare it will also accommodate research, education & training. Since pre-care and aftercare are also part of the healthcare process, proper alignment with the referrers (e.g. other hospitals, healthcare centers and General Practitioners) is one of the tasks of such a Comprehensive Center.

Setting up a Centre

In the near future we will focus on establishing the UMC Groningen Cancer Center (GCC). In this center, top specialists will work together in close collaboration to provide the best possible care to patients. The GCC is a great example of innovation resulting from the interaction between different forms of scientific research (clinical, translational and basic). The GCC encourages professionals to give their best in order to provide the best possible care to the growing number of cancer patients.

Within the UMC Groningen Transplantation Center (GTC) all specialties in the field of organ transplantation collaborate to improve care and the profiling of research. The specialties combine their knowledge and experience, thus strengthening each other, e.g. in the area of after-transplant care, joint research lines and center-oriented education. The GTC has good reason to call itself the transplant center of the Netherlands.

Moreover, we will continue to expand Expert Centers, following the existing centers such as the Sports Medical Center, in which we organize the care around patient groups, while the design of the care is developed in close consultation with patients.
We are starting up a knowledge Center for Quality and Safety in Healthcare.

In this new knowledge Center we bring together our knowledge and expertise of quality and safety in healthcare and how to anchor these in a complex health organization. The main objective is to share knowledge about effective quality improvements, so that we may learn from each other. The knowledge Center also spreads knowledge about quality improvements that have proven to be effective, innovative programs and best practices. In addition, an internal implementation organization will be set up. Scientific research will evaluate the efficacy of implemented quality improvements and new interventions or programs. The long-term ambition is to develop the knowledge Center into a prominent (inter)national scientific institute.

With eHealth the patient is more in charge of his care.

In addition to a foundation of simple, easily found and clear information, we use the Internet more and more often for self-diagnosis, health monitoring and e-consulting. Patients also use the Internet to schedule their own appointments. The options offered by our new Electronic Health Record will be used here.

We work in closer collaboration with healthcare partners, businesses, government institutions, educational institutions and others to share and valorize knowledge.

Working on ‘healthy ageing’ is something we do with others. Over 200 businesses and institutions take part in the Healthy Ageing Network for the North of the Netherlands (HANNN). This network is officially acknowledged by the European Council. This is something businesses active in Healthy Ageing solutions benefit from; these next few years they are more likely to receive European grants. The business climate in our region thus becomes even better.

In the meantime, the HANNN encourages the further business and project development of, for example, the Healthy Ageing Campus of the Netherlands, where top researchers meet. Regional and (inter)national collaboration will be expanded. The HANNN also commits to social agendas such as C4Youth and the Network for the Elderly in the North of the Netherlands.
We innovate our educational programs.

As of 2014 we will introduce a new Medicine Bachelor program: G2020. A new development is the learning communities with a digital learning environment for certain aspects. Learning communities are small groups of students and tutors that each have their own profile: global health, molecular medicine, extramural healthcare and hospital care. Academic education and deepening of knowledge take place in the context of the profile.

We are all ‘Healthy at work’.

What we advise our patients to do, we must do ourselves. We set the example by eating healthy diets, taking more exercise, quitting smoking and reducing stress. The Healthy@Work program encourages this in all UMCG staff. Also we are working to create a pleasant work environment, in which people can perform to the best of their ability and remain in a good physical condition at the same time.

We hold a stable position in the top of research institutes.

Every year we continue to improve our research by focusing on Healthy Ageing. Also, we continue to invest in excellent research facilities and to award research performance grants. We offer tailored tenure tracks to our top researchers. In everything we do, the further improvement of the quality of our research is what guides us.
Our basis

Clinical Governance
Employees in our organization develop themselves continuously. They have a strong focus on the quality of care and patient safety. This is why we opted for Clinical Governance, by means of which we will link the everyday practice of the healthcare professional to the world of regulations, finance and policies. Clinical Governance also means that we work together as teams, that ownership lies with the professionals, that we think in terms of processes, work with a system of trust-based leadership, and communicate in an open and appreciative manner.

Inspired and skilled employees
We are always looking for talented employees with new ideas about how to make things better. We try to give all our people room to excel and innovate in order to achieve our collective ambitions. Having motivated and highly skilled staff is an important precondition for achieving our mission and vision.

Corporate social responsibility
The world at large experiences the results of our work and our focus on Healthy Ageing. We respond to major social issues and needs. Our contribution therefore has a great ‘societal impact’; at the moment, this mainly concerns the North of the Netherlands, but eventually it will ripple way beyond. Our goal is to have an equally big if not bigger impact on society. In this respect, socially responsible enterprise is a given: we take responsibility for the effects our professional activities have on people and the environment.
Building the Future of Health 2020

**Mission**
*What is our reason to be*
- Excellent healthcare
- Excellent research
- Excellent education and programs

**Vision**
*What we want to be*
- Healthy Ageing
- The patient takes center stage in all our activities

**Core values**
*What we believe in*
- Teamwork:
  - Safe
  - Dedicated
  - Reliable
  - Respectful

**Strategy**
*What we need to do*
- Set the example for quality and safety
- Organize healthcare around patient groups
- Inspire partnerships within the chain
- Maintain position in international top of research, education and training
- Translate Healthy Ageing to clinics and staff
- Combine treatment and prevention
- From customized care to personalized medicine

**Basis**
*How we organize and behave ourselves*
- Clinical Governance
- Corporate social responsibility
- Inspired and skilled employees

**Objectives**
*What will we realize*
- Comprehensive Centers: Oncology & Transplantation
- Further expansion of expert centers
- Knowledge Center Quality & Safety
- E-health & personalized medicine
- Social impact: e.g. HANNN-2
- Innovate education: Learning communities
- Healthy@Work
- Stable position in top of research
COLOPHON

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