

## **Preface**

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

It is a fact that in the last ten years a massive debate about quality has found its way into health policies and medical discussions. This is not least also due to the economic pressure being felt more and more in all areas of medicine—with, at the same time, rapidly growing diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities in medicine.

To maintain this high medical standard state-of-the-art treatment must be a matter of course. In no case should economics govern medicine. We doctors will only be able to counteract this by being open to new ideas.

One of these ideas that can lead to a new quality in patient care is Integrated Care. Integrated Care describes the coordinated delivery of support to individuals in a way that enables them to maximize their independence, health and well-being. Coordination of this type is especially important for people who require support from a variety of doctors or organizations or individual care workers. The delivery of Integrated Care is influenced by the practice of staff, the systems they work within, how users are engaged and the structure of organizations.

Doctors have and will continue to have an important role in the system of Integrated Care. Their role is that of gatekeepers. They guide their patients through the

system. This is of great advantage to the patient as she/he receives all the information she/he requires for optimal care at one central point.

The medical faculty and especially the Medical Association as its political representative are making a great effort to create appropriate structures for optimal process management within hospitals and for colleagues in private practice. We have to find models that meet the requirements of an ever increasing specialization in medicine.

To cope with the upcoming task in medicine and public health systems we have to be open-minded, interested and willing to make new experiences, to face new challenges and to develop and extend our medical knowledge from day-to-day.

You have to have visions and then implement them. Incorporate the contents of this 9th International conference on Integrated Care into your daily work for your personal professional further education and for the good of the patients.

I wish all participants a motivating and stimulating exchange of information and ideas.

Walter Dorner, MR, Dr.,  
*President of the Viennese and  
Austrian Chamber of Physicians*