

Patient First in Denmark vs. Austria

A Comparative Healthcare Journey

Exploring how two European healthcare systems put patients at the center of care through different approaches, philosophies, and practical implementations.

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2025-09-23





Setting the Stage: What Does "Patient First" Mean?

Denmark's Vision

Sygehus Lillebaelt defines "Patient First" as seeing patients as equals, involving them in decisions, and ensuring safety through timely care with clear promises.

Austria's Focus

Emphasizes personalized care through strong patient-doctor relationships, prioritizing accessibility and convenience in healthcare delivery.

Both systems share a commitment to patient-centered care, but their approaches reflect distinct healthcare philosophies and structural frameworks.

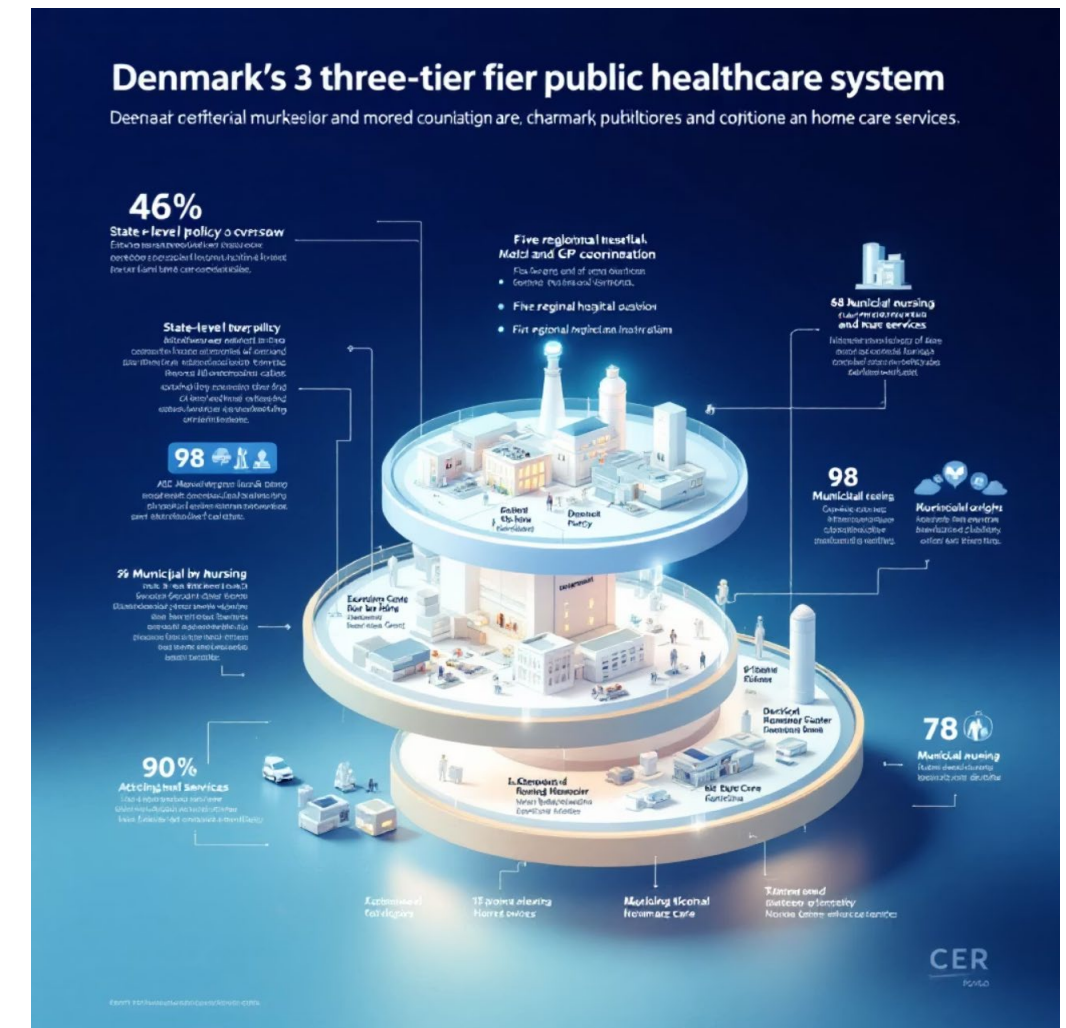
Denmark's Public Healthcare Backbone

Universal Foundation

- Universal coverage funded entirely by taxes
- 10.8% of GDP invested in healthcare (2024 WHO)
- Minimal out-of-pocket costs for patients

Three-Tier Structure

- **State level:** Policy and oversight
- **5 regions:** Hospitals and GP coordination
- **98 municipalities:** Nursing and home care



This comprehensive structure ensures seamless patient pathways and strong regional coordination across all care levels.

Sygehus Lillebaelt Hospital: The Patient Pyramid in Pyramid in Action

01

Patient Involvement

Active participation in treatment decisions decisions with clear, transparent communication throughout the care journey. journey.

02

Top Expertise

Continuous research, education, and innovation ensuring patients receive cutting-edge medical care.

03

Comprehensive Responsibility

University hospital serving regional and national needs with integrated specialized and specialized and general care.

04

Time Appreciation

Respecting patients' time through efficient processes and streamlined streamlined care delivery.

05

Partnership Approach

Working together as partners, ensuring patients "never get let go" let go" until fully transitioned.

Contrasting Healthcare Models

TM

Denmark's Approach

Tax-funded universal system with regional coordination and strong academic academic hospital integration for comprehensive care delivery.

A

Austria's Method

Bismarck mixed system incorporating private sector roles with digital tools enhancing patient-centric care experiences.



Both systems prioritize patient safety, involvement, and quality care, but differ significantly in their funding mechanisms and delivery approaches.





Outcomes and Patient Satisfaction



Rising Life Expectancy

Denmark reports consistently high satisfaction with healthcare access and quality, contributing to increased healthy life healthy life years for citizens.



Surgical Excellence

Hip replacement and femoral fracture patients experience 10% reduced mortality through early discharge, preventing delirium and enabling home recovery.



Innovative Care

Young cancer patients attend school while receiving chemotherapy through portable delivery systems, maintaining normal childhood experiences.

Stand-up Meetings - Huddles

Multi-Level Communication - HUDDLES

- Nurse director with head nurses coordination
- All-staff ward meetings with Safety Cross
- Bi-weekly management huddles for strategic alignment
- Weekly multidisciplinary OT huddles

Quality Assurance

GEMBA Walks conducted regularly at units to directly observe and assess quality of care delivery at the frontlines.



Lean Tools for Units

Patient-Centered Tools

- Patient boards for transparency
- Hourly patient rounds
- Daily patient questionnaires
- Hourly flow

Operational Excellence

- 7/4 P methodology
- Zoning systems
- Optimized care carts
- 5 S organization method

Continuous Improvement

- Kaizen boards for ongoing enhancement
- Team-driven improvement initiatives
- Regular process optimization

These lean methodologies create systematic approaches to efficiency while maintaining focus on patient care quality.

Excellent Nursing

Professional Care

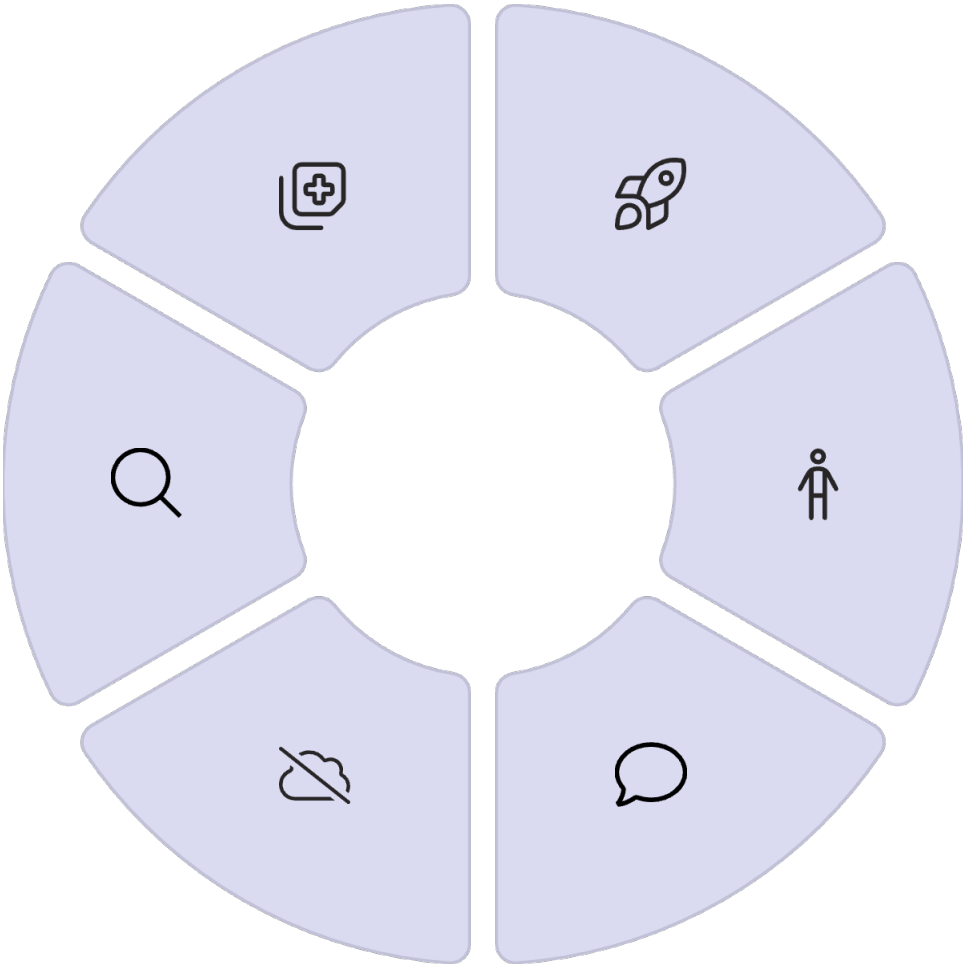
Evidence-based practice with continuous skill development

Ethics

Upholding moral principles in all care decisions

Relational

Building meaningful therapeutic relationships



Trust

Building reliable relationships with patients and families

Person-Centered Care

Individualized approaches respecting patient preferences

Authentic Presence

Being genuinely present and engaged with patients

Quality Enhancement: Journal clubs, nursing rounds, and unit-based Safety Cross measurements ensure continuous professional development and care quality monitoring.



Conclusion: Lessons Learned & Opportunities Opportunities



Real-World Impact

The "5 Promises" and "Patient First Approach" create tangible differences in treatment approaches and patient outcomes.



Unlimited Potential

Healthcare systems have more opportunities for patient-centered improvement than initially apparent.



Never Too Late

Transformation can begin at any time - small steps often make the most significant difference.

"Ultimately, the patient's voice and experience remain the compass guiding all healthcare systems. In the hospital, you could feel the culture everywhere - often little steps make the difference and are easier to start."