

The Hospital of the Autonomous Community

Introduction

On June 23, 1993, the Osasuna Zainduz Strategic Plan was backed by the majority of the Basque Parliament. The plan contained a deep reflection of the contemporary models of health care policy, and concluded with the conviction that it was necessary to change the existing management models. The Basque public health care system found itself in a situation of increasing costs, which in the opinion of public administrations, was due to the aging population, the incorporation of sophisticated new technologies and the cultural change of citizens and their perception towards health care benefits and the levels of quality they have a right to, and created an inevitable increase in demand.

As a result of the health care policy debate, the Basque Government Health Care Department presented the Health Care Ordinance Law to the Autonomous Parliament on June 26, 1997. In its statement of motives, it defines itself as a fundamental tool in articulating the commitment of public powers with citizens, in regards to the development and application of the right to protection and health care.

The Health Care Ordinance Law pursues a model that is able to satisfy the health care needs under the premises of universality, equity and quality, united to their indispensable effectiveness and efficiency, as well as rationing the benefits that the administration coordinates with the resources available. Starting from the unified organisation of all of the public health care resources in the Autonomous Community, it establishes the Basque Country's Health System as a development framework, fitted within the National Health Care System, and is then endowed with the Basque Country's Health Plan in order to establish the basic health objectives to be pursued by all of the Basque public institutions.

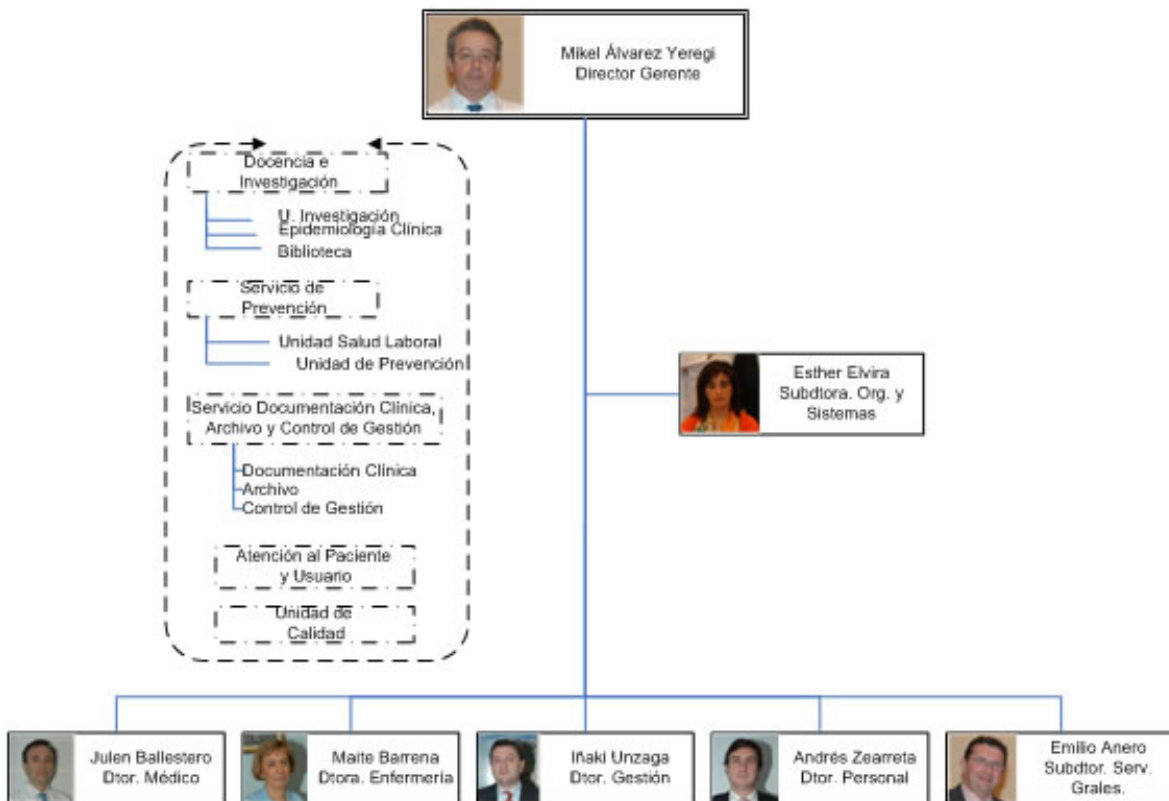
A basic element in reaching the objectives is to provide health care services to citizens. The Health Care Ordinance Law assures that providing health care services is the instrumental activity, that it offers people an organised and standardised resource with the objective of providing them health care benefits focused on the promotion, conservation and re-establishment of their health.

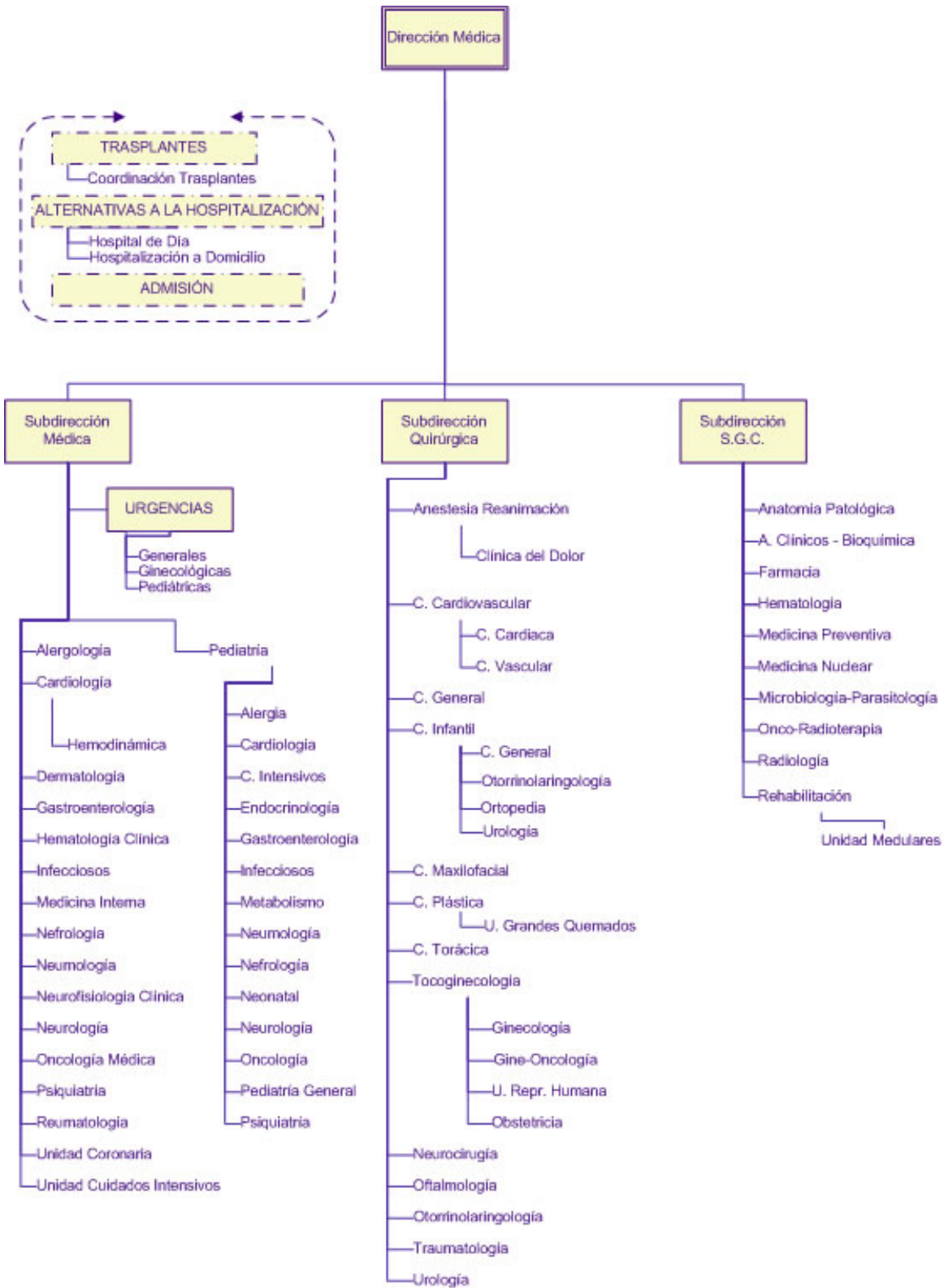
This task is entrusted to the health care service organisations of Osakidetza / Basque Health Care Service (S.V.S.), which includes Cruces Hospital. The newly developed functional and management model becomes a reality through the creation of Osakidetza / Basque Health Care Services Social Statutes with the Decree 255/1997, of November 11, which transforms the previously mentioned autonomous organisation into a Private Law Public Entity, valid as of January 1, 1998. In summary, the change offers health care

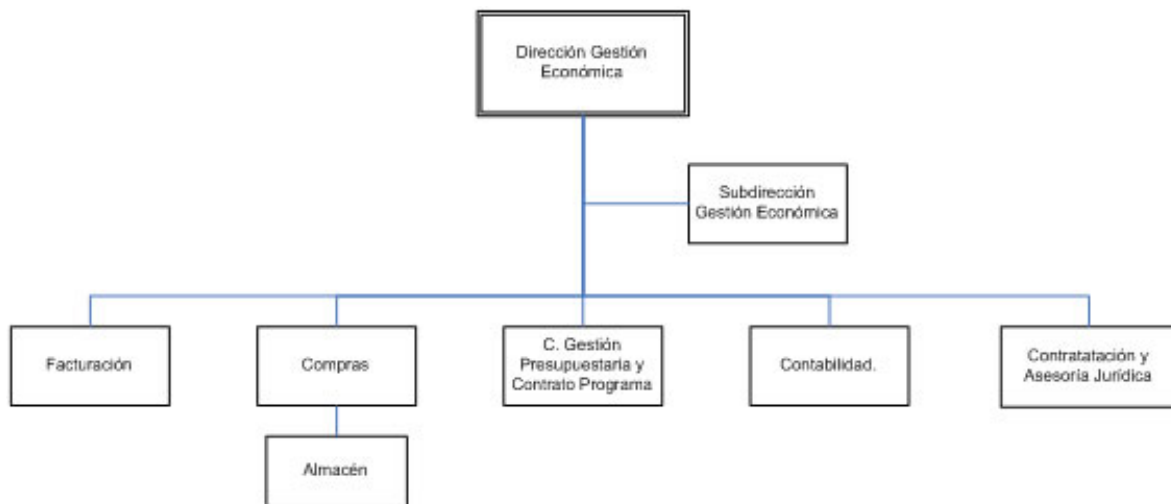
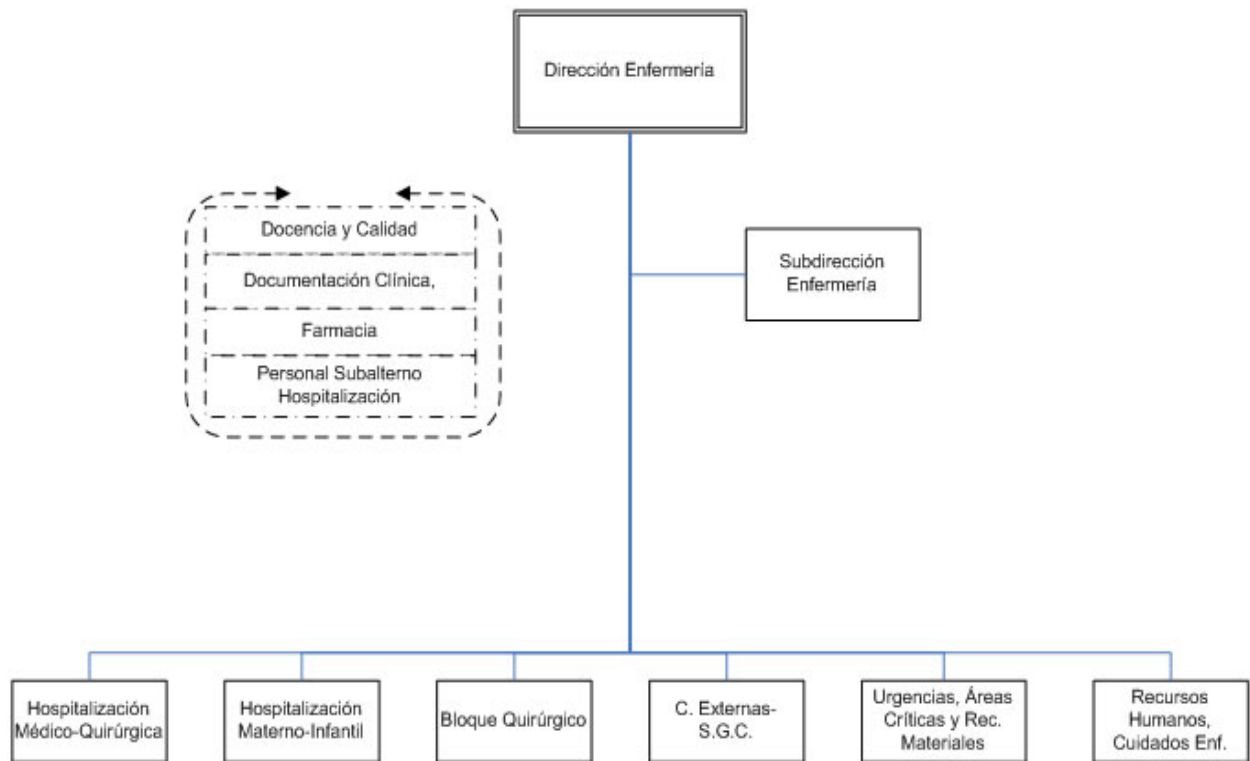
organisations the ability to operate under the principle of economic-financial and management autonomy, establishing through the Programme Contract a judicial instrument that directly communicates these with the Health Care Department, and which undertakes the activity objectives and financing backed by budgeted public credits. Due to its nature, Cruces Hospital is a health care services organisation that is equipped to provide highly specialised health care.

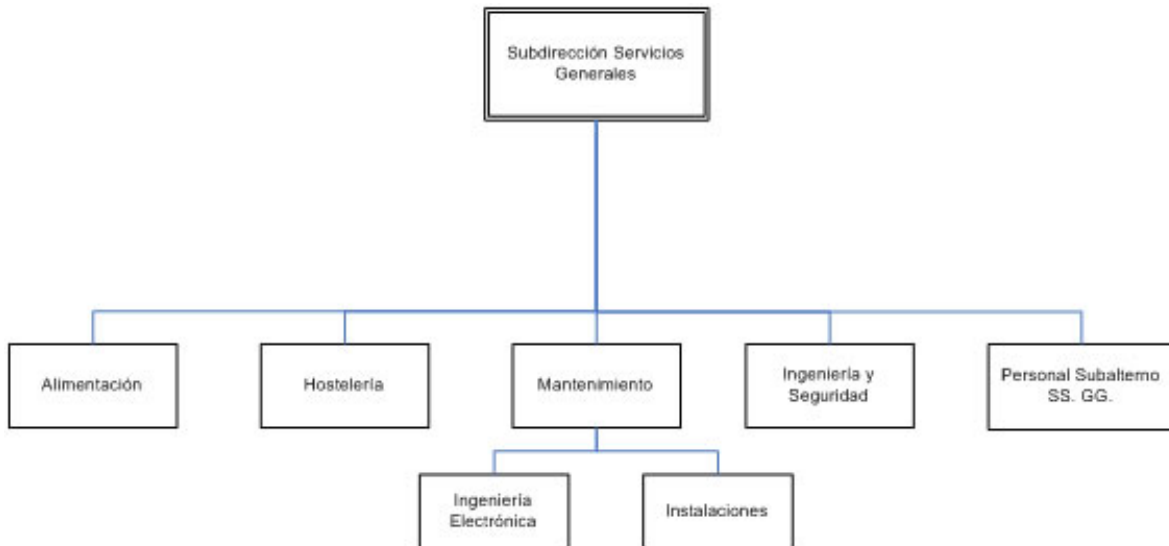
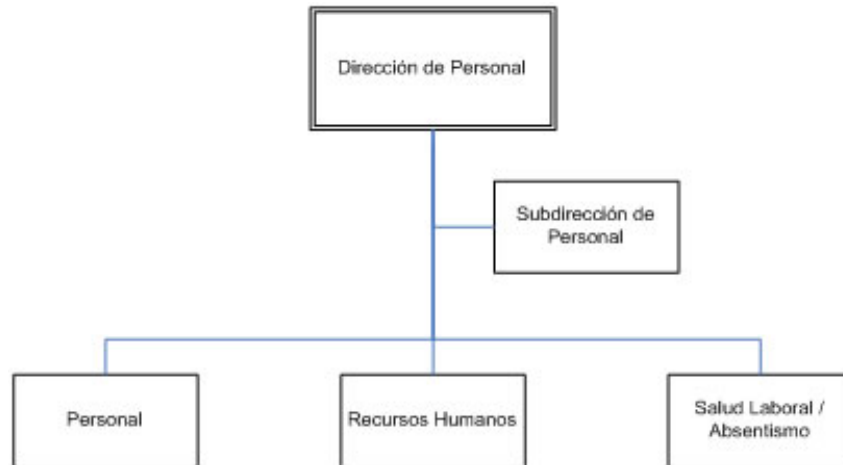
The centre's functional structure and hierarchy is defined by the Health Care Ordinance Law and the Decree 194-1996 of July 23, regarding the Organisational Structure of the resources assigned to the Osakidetza / Basque Health Care Service for Specialised Health Care. The centre's leader is the Executive Director, who relies on a Team of Directors for support. There is a Board of Directors for the development of proposal functions and consulting, which is made up of the Executive Director, the Team of Directors, Unit Chiefs to be determined, and representatives of the Technical Board, a participation and consultancy team of professionals in the Hospital's management.

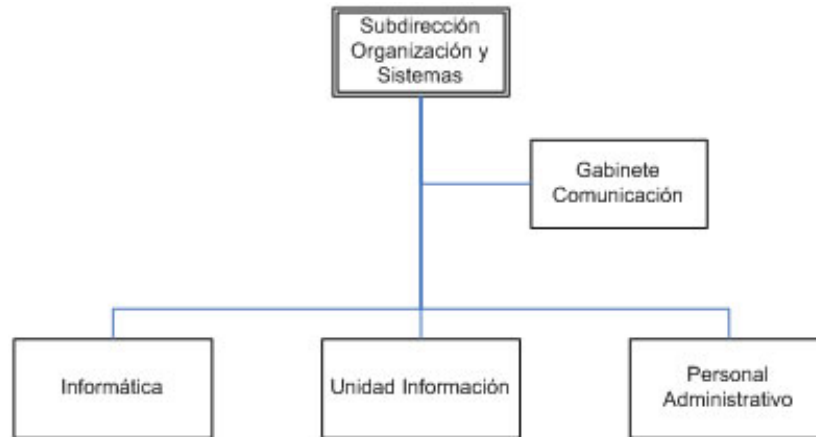
Organigramme











[View the members in detail](#)

History

Since the opening of its doors on July 20, 1955, until now, the Hospital has lived the evolution of the Spanish public health care system. It is built as part of the National Plan of Health Care Institutions of the era, with the goal of providing the State with a public health care infrastructure, that will help slow the delicate health care situation in the province. With its construction in the Cruces neighbourhood, Baracaldo is able to reach the objective of creating a guaranteed health care centre to face the strong impact of the migratory movement towards the left part of the country.

The Hospital has experienced different ways of understanding hospital organisation. Initially it was named "Residencia Sanitaria Enrique Sotomayor," as a modern expression distant to the despised concept of a Hospital, which was linked to a charitable image of health care. Between the end of 1971 and the beginning of 1972, with the inauguration of the Maternity Clinic, the Child Hospital and the Traumatology and Rehabilitation Centre, the health care centre is integrated into the new health care construction policy of Hospital Complexes. These health care institutions are characterised by being made up of several specialised hospitals. The Hospital Complex consists of: the General Hospital (which is the heart of the initial "Residencia Sanitaria"), the Traumatology and Rehabilitation Centre, the Maternity Clinic and the Child Hospital. In 1985, the INSALUD decree, later changed to Osakidetza, refers to all of the health care centres in which hospitalisation takes place using the generic name of Hospital. The new concept is accompanied by changes to the administration and management models of a health care centre. The positions of Executive Director and Medical Directors appear, as well as Nursing and Economic Management as basic hospital management units, substituting the previous categories of Hospital Complex Director, Administration Board and Director of each centre in the Hospital Complex. Afterwards, Cruces Hospital creates the Director positions for Human Resources, Organisation and Systems, General Services, as well as the Medical Assistant Director positions for Surgical Services, Medical Services, General Clinical Services and Teaching and Research. In 1997, a Health Care Administration is created as the backbone of the medical health care and nursing responsibilities.

The first Director of the centre was Mr. Larrosa Cortina, who remained in charge until 1960. His successors to date have been: Mr. Andaluz Soler (1960 - October 1972); Mr. García Valdecasas (November 72 - July 73); Mr. Vallejo Flórez (July 73 - October 75); Mr. Del Castillo Rodríguez-Acosta (November 75 - January 77); Mr. Vega (January 77 - December 77); Mr. Martínez (December 77 - February 78); Mr. Madoz (February 78 - January 81); Mr. Azkuna (January 81 - May 82); Mr. Astorki, who had two different and consecutive roles: the first, as Director (June 82 - December 84), and the second, as Executive Director (January 85 - March 88); Mr. Jaca Arrizabalaga (March 88 - March 91), Mr. Iñaki Echevarría, (March 91 - April 97); Mr. Luis de la Torre, (April 97 – November 99); Ms. Gloria Quesada (November 99 – July 05). Since this last date, the position has been held by Mikel Álvarez Yeregi.

The health care activity developed in the heart of the centre is familiar with the emergence of the hospital's medical specialties. Initially grouped into large categories such as Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Traumatology, Paediatrics and Maternity, research and the development of medical technology have favoured the appearance of medical specialties endowed with a service structure. Additionally, the hierarchies of the various Departments and Services are developed.

THE FIRST TRANSFORMATIONS SINCE ITS OPENING UNTIL 1997

The evolution of the health care centre infrastructure has four phases. The first, its construction and start-up. The second, its transformation into a Hospital Complex. The third phase, due to the Hospital Complex's need for expansion in light of the growing demand for health care, takes place in 1973 with the approval and construction of a Services Pavilion, a Teaching and Management Pavilion, a Pathological Anatomy Pavilion and car parks, in addition to expanding the centres that make up the Hospital Complex. The fourth phase consists of a modernisation policy and adapting to the new needs of the health care services, and which is currently in process: the Renovation Plan. Within this phase, the development of the Cruces Square begins, following an agreement between the Basque Health Care Service and the Baracaldo Government. The renovation takes place in a staggered manner, area by area, and starts with improving the accommodations of the rooms of the renovated services, installing two beds instead of the three that were previously standard. As part of this phase, in 1993 a new Emergency Care service is inaugurated, which entails the unification of the Medical-Surgery and Traumatology areas, previously separated logistically. In April 1995, the new Paediatric Emergency Care service is established, located next to General Emergency Care. Later, the Gynaecological Emergencies admissions desk is transferred to Emergency Care General Admissions, which centralises emergency services for patients. In 1996, a new Haemodialysis Unit is created, and in 1997, the renovation reaches the Radiodiagnosis Service and begins the unification of the Intensive Care, Anaesthesia-Resuscitation and Surgical Areas units.

From the first kidney transplant to the birth of the first "in vitro" baby

On July 6, 1979, the first Biscay kidney transplant is performed in the hospital. It is a mere sample of the technology and the high-quality medical services that are carried out in the centre, and in which all of the hospital services participate. In 1996, it becomes the hospital that has performed the most

kidney transplants, a total of 1,000, since the programme's existence. In May 1982, the Hospital begins performing cornea transplants. On February 2, 1996, the array of transplants offered is expanded with the first liver transplant that is performed in the centre. On July 9, 1985, the Hospital is news throughout the State, thanks to the birth of the first "in vitro" baby within the public health care system.

The centre is accredited to provide specialised medical training of 37 specialties, beginning its Resident Medical Intern programmes in 1972. Since 1989, it has a Research Unit, in which the first research studies of animal experiments and molecular biology have been performed.

Launch of the Alternatives to Hospitalisation programme

The hospital initially opens its doors with 625 beds, reaching 1,500 during peak periods at the Hospital Complex, but it is currently reduced to below 1,000 beds. The health care situation experienced by the centre has included periods of patient oversaturation, requiring them to be hospitalised in the hallways due to the lack of sufficient hospital facilities throughout the province. This situation remains from 1975 until 1986, when the Galdakao Hospital provides a sufficient number of beds and San Eloy Hospital begins to fully operate. In 1992, the Basque Health Care Service initiates the Alternatives to Hospitalisation programme. The new philosophy promotes the idea of avoiding hospital stays for patients that are open to being attended in an outpatient system. The programme launches the Outpatient Hospital, Surgery Without Hospitalisation Unit, and the Short Stay Unit. Cruces Hospital is a pioneer in this health care philosophy, launching the Home Hospitalisation Service in 1983. The implementation of these Alternatives to Hospitalisation have caused an increase in Hospital health care activities, while at the same time, allowing a more adequate number of beds that will offer better hospital service quality.

A HOSPITAL THAT IS CONSTANTLY GROWING (1998 – 2007)

In recent years, the centre has constantly added value to the public health care system. While it satisfactorily resolves the population's health needs, a number of events have placed the centre as a highly specialised entity that is at the forefront of numerous specialties: using radiosinovectomy against rheumatoid arthritis; confirming the success of congenital cardiopathy interventions, which has resulted in a demand from all over the State; the study of the Incidence of Pulmonary Diseases along with six national hospitals; the development of the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation Technique, a pioneer in the State, that reduces infant mortality by 10% and which is presented as part of the centre's celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Neonatology Services; the opening of the first Outpatient Hospital for Medullar Lesions that promotes the progressive integration of paraplegics and quadriplegics into family and social life; the implementation of a new system to identify newborns through DNA studies using a blood sample.

Additionally, in April 1998, the Linear Accelerator for cancer treatment is inaugurated, the first surgical interventions for the treatment of epilepsy are performed, and the hospitalisation and emergency treatment services for psychiatric patients are opened, and in November 1998, a diabetes early-detection program for babies is implemented as part of the European Newborn-IDDMM Project.

In 1999, the Parkinson's Surgery project begins, which involves coordinating the experiences of neurologists, neurophysiologists and neurosurgeons. The "Resident Medical Intern Training Activities Report" is created, with the idea of creating an accurate record of the experiences that the resident medical intern has acquired in the centre.

Award for the best State centre in the category of "Great Teaching Hospitals"

Once the Y2K effect is overcome, which had put the information technology services on alert, the hospital continues with its infrastructure renovation plan: expanding the outpatient hospital, new equipment for the Haemodynamics Services, new Anaesthesia-Resuscitation services, Coronary and Intensive Care Units, as well as new operating rooms for heart, thoracic, vascular and laparoscopic surgeries. In the health care field, the hospital uses the amniotic membrane for eye surface reconstruction in ophthalmology. In the health care management field, Cruces Hospital receives the award for the best State centre in the category of "Great Teaching Hospitals" as part of the Top-20 programme elaborated by IASIST. The reorganisation of hospital laboratories commences, and the new Occupational Risk Prevention Service is presented with the goal of fostering workplace evaluations. As a final note for the year, the hospital begins a campaign to avoid the use of tobacco in the centre's common areas.

During 2001, the hospital continues with its renovation and growth. The Las Arenas Laboratory is integrated, the transfer of Specialised Health Care from the Ezkerraldea-Enkarterri comarca is assumed, ICSI begins to be used as a new technique for infertility treatments, the Epilepsy Unit is endowed with a new diagnosis unit that promotes the epilepsy surgery programme, and the Pain Unit is renovated with new facilities. The in-depth renovation of the Maternity Area starts to become a reality with the inauguration of 38 beds in rooms that include a bathroom and have been equipped to favour the communication between mother and child. The Emergency Care service receives a new Scanner, a second Linear Accelerator and a second Magnetic Resonance machine. For heart patients, a new Haemodynamics room is prepared, destined for diagnosis and treatment.

Aside from their day to day health care, the professionals contribute to the centre's prestige through its technical and human capacity. An International Course in Clinical Cytology is held, as well as a National Meeting of Liver Transplant Groups (doctors and nurses), and in January, a Molecular Biology Course takes place. Additionally, a Surveillance, Prevention and Control of Nosocomial Infections Plan is approved. The accreditation from the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) is obtained for a period of four years.

The hospital participates in a self-assessment, using the EFQM Excellence model, with the goal of obtaining the Silver Q Award for Total Quality before 2004. The evaluation of occupational risks begins (Occupational Risk Map), to which all of the centre's workers are submitted, in order to establish the corresponding preventive measures, followed by training and information. The implementation continues of the programme that will allow the Hospital to be a Smoke Free Environment. A Social Atmosphere Survey is performed, with the objective of becoming aware of satisfaction levels in the work environment. A Communication Office is established to open the channels of communication, and the Executive Committee for Research and Teaching is created to promote and coordinate the activities that are developed in this area.

In 2002, the Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe inaugurates the new Obstetrics and Gynaecology Emergency Care and the new Childbirth Area on Monday, June 24. Modern consultations for Ophthalmology, Surgery, Urology and Otolaryngology are prepared. Psychiatry increases its number of beds and an Outpatient Hospital for eating disorders is opened. The technological equipment is reinforced with a Digital Angiograph and a new Magnetic Resonance machine.

2002 is a difficult year for the Hospital: following the service reorganisation agreement, the anaesthesiologists conclude a strike; in July, an outbreak of Legionella is detected on the second floor, which requires the floor to be closed until it is eradicated. As a preventive measure, and complying with the general maintenance rules, hyperchlorination of the entire hot and cold water network is performed at the end of September.

In the clinical management field, the Economic Management Administration and the General Services Administration obtain the ISO 9001/2000 Certification.

The research activities of the health care professionals receive several recognition awards throughout the year. In this regard, the "2002 Queen Sofía Research on the Prevention of Deficiencies" award for a nutritional and genetic study, obtained by the paediatric Dr. Pablo Sanjurjo, is a strong support of the centre's research activities.

In 2003, Cruces Hospital continues the modernisation of its facilities. A new Surgical Block on 6-B and the new Nursing Unit on 3-B, with 52 beds for Traumatology, are inaugurated.

Research again plays a relevant role with the discovery, by the neurologist Dr. Zarranz's team, of two new mutations in the genes that determine Parkinson's disease. In the international field, the relevant role played by the Neonatal service stands out, as it becomes the coordinator for Euronet, a European network of neonatal units to compare the quality of their health care. Additionally, the Home Hospitalisation service, a pioneer in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, celebrates its 20th anniversary.

In 2004, with the support of Neurosurgery and other services, the Epilepsy Unit successfully performs the first case of extratemporal epilepsy surgery in the Basque Country. Likewise, telemedicine, which is known as an advance in the use of telecommunications technology, has multiple applications. One of the fields in which it is promoted within the Cruces Hospital Ophthalmology Service is eye control in patients with diabetes mellitus associated to the presence of diabetic retinopathy.

In February, a new space is made available to the Molecular Genetics Laboratory, with the collaboration of the BIOEF Foundation. Additionally, a new Human Reproduction Unit is created, improving the unit's biosafety conditions.

In regards to communication, the new informative newspaper, "Hospital de Cruces" is edited, allowing the development of health care news, as well as disseminating content related to research, training and the hospital environment. On another hand, a computerised alarm system, implemented as part of the initiative in the Paediatric Metabolism Section, warns of the existence of a metabolic disease and provides information about the patient's characteristics as well as their treatment and care, in order to avoid possible life risks during emergencies. Cruces inaugurates a cyberclassroom for the entertainment of Paediatric patients and their families.

The Cruces Hospital Quality Unit publishes the data from the latest survey, which measures the satisfaction of patients that received treatment in the various Emergency Care services. The report shows

that patients are highly satisfied with the care received, both as far as the general conditions as well as the technical capabilities of the professionals that cared for them.

Commemoration of the Hospital's 50th anniversary

2005 is a special year for the Hospital. On one hand, it is the year in which Cruces Hospital completes 50 years of providing services to citizens. On another hand, in July, Dr. Mikel Álvarez Yeregui, from the Basurto Hospital Management, substitutes Gloria Quesada as the Hospital's Executive Director, who in turn obtains a position in the General Management of the Basque Health Care Service.

Gloria Quesada is accompanied by Dr. Michol González Torres, previously the Cruces Medical Director, who will be the new Health Care Director of the Basque Health Care System. This change is completed with the naming of Dr. Julen Balletero as the new Medical Director, the addition of Dr. Adela Olaskoaga as the Surgical Services Assistant Director, the addition of Dr. M^a Luz del Valle as the Medical Services Assistant Director, and the arrival of Edurne Omaetxebarria as the General Clinical Services Assistant Director. At a later time, Andrés Zearreta will be the new Personnel Director, substituting Juana Fernández.

The commemoration of the 50th Anniversary is celebrated in the first half of June. The events schedule is divided into two clearly differentiated sections: the celebration of social events focused on honouring all of the professionals, and a wide array of scientific sessions to be attended by the doctors themselves as well as internationally renowned professionals. In this way, the Hospital's doctors participate alongside Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Juan Carlos Izpisúa Belmonte, Valentín Fuster, Pedro Duque, Stephen Katz and a long list of names that, for a few days, place the health care centre at the top of the news.

In the clinical area, Gabriel Inclán, the Health Care Superintendent, inaugurates the new Neonatal Unit. In May, the new Outpatient Hospital, located on the ground level with direct ambulance access, is inaugurated, this time with the presence of the Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe.

The Hospital undertakes the most important construction project of recent years

During 2006, Mikel Álvarez, the Executive Director, presents what will be one of the largest projects in recent years, the construction of a building attached to the A wing, which will allow to increase the number of beds as well as provide a service building, which will entail the unification of hospital laboratories.

Along with this news, several actions are carried out to modernise the hospital facilities, such as inaugurating a new Medical Oncology consultation area, the Electrophysiology Unit or the acquisition of a third Linear Accelerator for the Radiology Service. On their behalf, the directors, as well as medical, nursing and management supervisors create a shared vision of the development of a hospital model that aspires to be the reference in the Basque Country, with areas of excellence in health care, teaching and research.

On a medical level, 2006 marks the beginning of the live-donor kidney transplant programme, started by the Basque Health Care Service in an attempt to shorten wait lists, and which involves Cruces performing the first intervention of this type using Laparoscopy.

Additionally, the hospital implements the sentinel node technique in the treatment of breast cancer, which includes Biscay in this type of treatment. Lastly, a surgical team led by Dr. Gabilondo extracts an abdominal flap weighing 60 kilos from a woman suffering from morbid obesity, relying on the multidisciplinary collaboration, which is key in the successful extraction of the mass.

On an international level, the hospital has a presence on three fronts. First, the Neonatal and the Epidemiology Units lead the Euroneostat project, which includes various health care centres and regional or state-wide information networks from 22 European countries under their coordination, regarding the medical care for premature babies. Second, the Research Unit's Molecular Genetics Laboratory participates in a project about the prevention of Type 1 Diabetes in newborns, coordinating the TRIGR project on a national level. Lastly, the Dietetics and Nutrition Unit is present for a session about nutrition in European hospitals that aims to bring together the nutritional criteria for hospitalised patients.

On his behalf, the Health Care Superintendent visits the Research Unit in November to become familiar with the research project that this unit has started about the use of stem cells in the treatment of genetic problems. The project is a pioneer in the State in the creation of a model with human cells that will allow the study of various diseases. In May, the silence campaign is established as part of the noise policy and reducing the number of visits, in order to improve hospital stays and health care tasks.

Additionally, a Style Manual is created to unify the elaboration criteria for creating documents. At the same time, a hospital floorplan is published, with which to better identify the location of the various units. The Information Technology Service undertakes the data network improvement, which will include a 40 Gigabyte bandwidth and greater stability of data transfer.

In May, the Accreditation Committee of the National Council of Medical Specialties agrees to grant the Resident Medical Intern Programme, coordinated by the Teaching and Research Unit, a three-year accreditation, which is the maximum time possible. Lastly, it is necessary to highlight the positive results obtained by the hospital's web page during this year, in which it is observed that the number of visits progressively increases from month to month.

In 2007, Child Endocrinology and the Health Care Comarcas agree on a model for the treatment of infant-child obesity, based on proper nourishment and physical exercise. Additionally, the Hospital hosts the first "ATCN" nursing accreditation courses held in the State. The goal of these courses is for the medical and nursing personnel to share a common language in the evaluation and treatment of polytraumatised patients.

At the beginning of the year, the Liver Surgery and Transplant Unit announces the implementation of Laparoscopic Liver Resection, which they have been performing since the end of the previous year. The technique places the hospital in line with the largest State health care centres. Additionally, the Hospital acquires a new 64-slice CAT machine, which is the first of these characteristics in the Basque Health Care Service.

Lastly, the ophthalmologist Dr. Jaime Etxebarria presents the excellent results of the Boston Type 1 Keratoprosthesis in corneal opacity without the possibility of a cornea transplant: it is able to recover a patient's vision. It is the first intervention of this type to be performed in a State public hospital.

Throughout 2008, work on the Hospital expansion continues, with the start of construction of the new General Services building and the General Emergency Care area.

During this year, new activities to improve patient and employee communication are organised. The Hospital web page adds new sections, such as the extranet and the citizen's forum. Additionally, the Sunday Concert Series, "Music to your health," begins in February, held in the Hospital hall. Also, in June, the First People's Recognition Awards Session takes place, and the professional card is implemented in January.

The Hospital is involved in various research projects. On one hand, the Neonatal Unit leads and coordinates the new Cooperative Research Subject Network (RETIC) about Mother-Child Health in Development. The Molecular Genetics Laboratory is recognised as the Expert Molecular Diagnosis Centre in the fields of hereditary mental retardation linked to the X chromosome and hereditary breast cancer. Additionally, the Hospital becomes one of the 40 centres in the entire State that will participate in the new CAIBER created by the Carlos III Health Institute.

On a medical level, the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Service presents its external cephalic version technique to the press, which it has been working on since 2002 and reduces the risks of a caesarean. On his behalf, the child surgeon Dr. Plácido López is the forerunner in High Resolution Paediatric Surgery, an initiative that allows to perform the pre-operative evaluation, the surgical intervention and the hospital discharge in a single Hospital visit. Additionally, Dr. Santiago Mintegi is the person responsible for leading and coordinating the new Paediatric Toxicology Observation area, along with Dr. Beatriz Azkunaga.

Obtaining the Silver Q for management quality is the perfect ending point for the year, an award which recognises Cruces Hospital's effort to improve its management and reach a level of excellence in the quality of its service.