

ANNUAL REPORT

SAAS will spend more than 83 million euros in 2021

More than 520 people are admitted to hospital for covid and the mortality rate in the ICU is 23%

One thousand health workers receive the covid pay, which is a total of 508,678 euros



MARICEL BLANCH

►► Archive image of the Emergency corridor of the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell.

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In 2021, the Andorran Health Care Service (SAAS) spent 83.2 million euros, divided between staff (46 million), general staff (34.1 million) and investment (3.1). This is 1.4 million more than in 2020, when 81.8 million euros were spent, most of which were spent to staff (44 million) at a time when recruitment was exponentially increased to due to the casualties and the increase in work that led to the outbreak of the coronavirus. In terms of revenue, the SAAS received 83.5 million euros (81.8 million in the previous year), 69.4 of which came from public funding and 14.1 from private funding. Thus, the total budget for 2021 was 93.3 million euros, six million more than in 2020.

Regarding the quality indica-

tors, it should be noted that the most frequent surgical operations were those of procedures on the eye and orbit, with 659, followed by procedures on the knee and lower leg except foot, with 283. Also, the main group of medical diagnoses were major lung infections and inflammations, with 449 people treated, ahead of childbirth (226) and kidney and urinary tract infections (101).

If we focus on the covid-19, throughout 2021 there were 524 total admissions, 488 of which were on the floor and 36 on the Cedar. In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) there were 77 discharges, which means a mortality rate in the same unit of 23.38%. 204 infected patients were also followed up at home and 676 visits were made through the Intermediate Control Center (ICC). According to the 2021 Annual Report

published last Friday on the SAAS website, the management took care of the difference of up to 100% of the salary not paid by the CASS of pregnant professionals who caused termination at the beginning of the pandemic and that there were 14 women. However, a covid-19 payment of 470 euros was offered and

benefited by 1,079 professionals, which cost 508,678 euros. In addition, psychological support was provided to all employees by the Mental Health Service, although the number of employees who were admitted did not exceed.

CARE ACTIVITY // Returning to the ge-

neral activity, during the last year there were up to 7,393 admissions to the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell, which represent an occupancy of conventional beds of 82.8% and an average stay of 5.6 days. The ICU admitted 436 people, with an occupancy rate of 52.38% and an average stay of 8.2 days. 32,396 people were treated in the hospital's emergency department, while 1,582 people were in the same service but at the Pas de la Casa Primary Care Center (CAP).

The total revenue of the parapu blic is 83.5 million euros, six million more than the previous year

In a similar vein, the CAPs attended 103,196 people, 8,238 home visits and 3,869 telephone calls were made. Focusing on school health, 1,413 students between the ages of 4 and 12 were screened, 2,186 children under the age of seven were monitored, and vaccination campaigns were conducted for 1,955 boys and girls between 12 to 15 years. By contrast, 90 residents were treated at the Cedre social and health center and most of the activities were focused on subacute, with 195 attendances.

Finally, the SAAS highlighted the new services of 2021, in which the specialization in vascular surgery (with two specialists) was the main goal and the new structures, which include, among others, a new major surgery ambulatory unit, the expansion of the Emergency Department, which separates the most serious patients from the others, and the transfer of corporate services, which has freed up space in the hospital and clinic and will now be occupied by care services. ≡

the figures

659 are the people who undergo the most frequent operation: procedure on eye and orbit.

77 patients were discharged from the ICU after being admitted to covid-19.

7,393 total hospital admissions, with an average stay of 5.6 days.

103,196 were the people attended to in the CAPs of the seven parishes and that of EI Pas.

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GENERAL COUNCIL

Font acknowledges service portfolio has «imperfections»

The new Minister of Health predicts that the framework law for the health professions will go ahead «very soon»

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA
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The new Minister of Health, Albert Font, who debuted before yesterday in the question session at the Government of the General Council, acknowledged that the portfolio of services recently approved by his predecessor, Joan Martínez Benazet, has «imperfections in form and background», as «the nomenclature is missing», although «it is good because it exists» and «therefore» can serve as a basis for work to correct it, as «it is a dynamic document, a permanent work», he assured. At the same time, he predicted that the health professions framework law would be approved during the policy debate, back in the summer. «We can be optimistic, the law will come out soon, as we are working with the groups involved», said Font.

Social Democrat General Councilor Susanna Vela, for her part, aligned herself with health professionals and asked why the portfolio of services had been approved before the framework law. According to the Minister of Health, «there is no link of submission or complementarity, as one regulates the scope of the professions and the other the acts covered by the CASS; the portfolio has now been approved for reasons of opportunity and necessity. «In addition, Font explained, the negotiators of the association agreement are addressing the content of the text of the framework law with the European Union (EU), so «they are two different instruments».

Vela denounced that «health can-



► The new Minister of Health, Albert Font, talks with the Social Democrat Minister, Susanna Vela.



SUSANNA VELA
GENERAL COUNCILOR OF THE PS

«There is an invasion of government powers over the Council; health cannot be redefined by decree»

not be redefined by decree, which is why we believe that there is an invasion of government powers over the General Council», she said. In addition, the Social Democrat councilor, in the same line as the professional groups, criticized the portfolio of services because «it will not generate savings» in the CASS, since «with the current situation more visits will be needed» and, therefore, «an increase in spending, as well as a delay in di-

agnosis», so «the circuit will be dilated over time and this could have serious consequences for people's health.» In short, Vela stated that the Executive had taken more into account the economic criteria than the health ones. The Minister of Health, for his part, explained that the new framework law for the health professions will include two different chapters, it will be a «dual» rule, he said, as it will include a com-

mon section for all professions and an specific to each of them. Font added that each school had reduced the demands with a view to reaching an agreement, so «we will try to make them feel comfortable, and no one will be left out», he said. Lastly, the head of Health did not clarify Vela's complaint about the requirement of knowledge of Catalan language regarding professionals who come from abroad to practice in Andorra. ≡

Two more months to decree measures for the pandemic

►► The General Council approved a new two-month extension yesterday to empower the government in making decisions to combat the pandemic. As stated by the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, Josep Maria Rossell, «although over the last few months the pandemic has been showing a positive evolution with a decrease in infections, even today positive ones are still detected daily» and, in addition, «In some countries, coronavirus damage is reviving.» Rossell also took advantage of the session to update health data. As a result, 68 new cases of covid had been reported in the last day. The assets were 554, of which four remain hospitalized at the Nostra Senyora de Meritxell hospital, two on the ground floor and two in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The government is announcing a package of measures to help the public

Wages below 24,000€ a year could rise according to the CPI

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The Prime Minister, Xavier Espot, announced yesterday during the regular session of the General Council that different ministries are preparing a package of measures aimed at helping citizens in the context of loss of purchasing power they suffer as a result of the crisis of the war in Ukraine. The initiative, which could be approved before the summer, will have to be agreed within the Economic and Social Coun-

cil, so it will have to have the approval of employers and unions.

Espot said this in response to a question from Social Democrat Minister Judith Salazar, following statements made by the President of the Andorran Business Confederation (CEA), Gerard Cadena, that wages should be increased according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Initially, Espot said that the government shared the position of the CEA and defended the «income pact», which should affect wages, rents, and fuel and energy prices for «significant impact on family economies and the consequent impact on their purchasing power».

At this point, the head of govern-

ment defended his economic policy, and recalled the annual increases in the minimum wage above the CPI approved by the Executive Chairman, and which have led to an increase of more than 200 euros during his mandate. He also explained that at the moment the minimum wage is 54% of the average wage, although the goal is to reach 60%, as stated in the European Social Charter. «We have broken some taboos regarding salary increases and we have maintained it year after year», he said in relation to the PS government.

At the same time, Espot hinted at the possibility of also imposing the obligation to increase salaries



►► The Head of Government, Xavier Espot, in a speech before the Council.

below 24,000 euros per year, as was done in 2018 and applied in 2019, because «they correspond to the punished class average». Salazar, for

his part, noted that the European Social Charter has warned Andorra that both wages and protection against illness are «insufficient». ≡

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