Background: Historically most treatment of musculoskeletal diseases in Denmark has taken place in hospitals. Today, treatment is split between different sectors, where the requirements are widely different. Physiotherapists, occupational therapists and dietitians are, to a certain extent, no longer found in the rheumatic sections of the hospitals, but rather expected to take care of rehabilitating treatment in one of the 98 municipalities. With the clinical guidelines, the Health Authorities has indicated which treatment areas the individual groups of patients will benefit from – however, there is lack of provision of these in many of the municipalities across the country.

Objectives: To secure that treatment guidelines - within the field of musculoskeletal diseases - made by The National Board of Health, are transformed into national quality standards for treatment in the municipalities.

Methods: To ensure that patients get the treatment needed, we have worked with external consultants resulting in two research papers (visible at link) on the subject at hand. One paper mapped how many of the 98 municipalities provides each of four treatment guidelines made by The National Board of Health. The four being – weight loss, education and physical training for hip- and knee osteoarthritis, education and physical training for patients with back conditions and interdisciplinary treatment for people with pain conditions. The other paper uncovered the potential economic gains for the public sector by introducing the treatment guidelines.

The Danish Rheumatism Association has used these research papers as a significant driver for a larger conference in October 2021 at the Danish Parliament – Christiansborg. Essential national politicians where present and they acknowledged the need for an increased focus on the treatment areas.

The results of the reports has also been shared with government officials, an existing commission on labor supply as well as municipalities etc. In connection with the recently held elections in Danish municipalities and regions, we have reached out to the local politicians experiencing a gap in the offerings either directly or through local media which will hopefully result in an uplift of the focus. In addition, we have made debate posts with among others - unions sharing our point of view.

Results: Essential national politicians acknowledged the need for an increased focus on the treatment areas. We hope that both from the municipalities as well as from a national level initiative will be taken to introduce a set of national quality standards within the field of musculoskeletal diseases because of our forceful approach.

Conclusion: The increased focus on treatment of musculoskeletal diseases is the result of strong collaboration between The Danish Rheumatism Associations department for Politics and Knowledge, Internal Communications and external partners. We believe that our work can inspire other European NGO's who has a need to increase their political agenda and awareness. We made a long-term goal, that the municipalities will help us achieve the goals.

Acknowledgements: The Danish Rheumatism Association

Disclosure of Interests: None declared