

Preface

Dear participants of INIC09!

As rector of the Medical University Vienna and your host during this conference, I want to express my warmest welcome to you! It is an honour for our university to have been invited by the International Network of Integrated Care to organise the 9th International Conference on Integrated Care and we were more than happy to follow this invitation. As a research institution, we accept our responsibility to explore new concepts and integrate newly developing research areas into our agenda. Integrated Care certainly fits this profile, as it is a vital part of public health and health systems research—even though, or precisely because many questions still remain to be answered. Hopefully, this conference will be able to provide solutions to some of these questions, or at least formulate important research questions for the future. After all, a good research question is half the battle won!

This year's conference title "Lost in Transition—Meeting the Challenge through Integrated Care" refers to a crucial area: within and between the institutions acting in health and social care systems contacts of any kind carry the potential for conflict. Transitional management is a necessity in systems as highly developed and diversified as ours, and facing the often-recited

challenges of changing demographics and resource restrictions. As a medical university with one of the biggest teaching hospitals in Central Europe, we have to find solutions, in theory as well as in practice, to cope with the challenges posed by the transition of patients, professionals and papers. Hence, our interest in integrated care also reflects the conviction that without ameliorated structures we will not be able to maintain the high quality in treatment, care, training and research, currently in place.

Integrated care is about shaping the environment we work in, placing a higher interest in communicating our aims and making the outcomes transparent. It is also a way of envisioning a better system for all parties involved; attributes which certainly are true for any area of research and most certainly very valuable for practice.

With this in mind, I hope this conference provides you with the right atmosphere and programme to inspire your creativity, foster out-of-the-box thinking and ignite fruitful discussions on how to develop integrated care even further.

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Rector Medical University Vienna