

EDITORIAL

THE UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH CARE POLICIES

The time in which the World Health Organization (WHO) conceived health as “a state of complete well-being”, the sickness-health process was not comprehended as the result of social variables, but as a static parameter which would result or not with the appearance of disease.

When then-Minister of Health in Canada, Mark Lalonde proposed in 1974 a new perspective for the health care system in that country through a worldwide questionnaire which related people to their environments, there began a new perception of the sickness-health process and its relationship before social inequalities, as well as the responsibility of public institutions towards promoting health in their populations through establishing and carrying out their policies.

In 1978 the WHO, through the Declaration of Alma-Ata, reconceptualized health as the right of every citizen and made sectors of the economy responsible for the adaptation of policies that would be capable of generating health. It was thus launching the concept that health was the result of the elaboration of public policies which range from commitment to planning to social equity, including strengthening society through access to education, information, and the right to one's voice, intending to strengthen health care actions to be implanted.

Brazil in the 1980s lived its period of redemocratization, and with it the protagonization of the sanitary movement. There was the discussion of the 8th National Health Care Conference, which culminated in the proposal for integration of health care actions and proposed the Brazilian Public Health Care System (Sistema Único de Saúde), established by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988,¹ and made into Law Number 8080 (Lei N^o 8080)².

Thus, if constructing health is its promotion and if its promotion is no longer under the exclusive dominion or responsibility of the professionals and sectors of the health care area, but rather political decisions, there is a need that the University endow society with professionals who are/will be capable of transforming and/or interfering in these policies for the better, directing them towards the promotion of the population's health.

Recognizing health as a public good, knowing epidemiology and the health care needs of the population, understanding the importance of interdisciplinarity and the multiprofessional team are references for the University to have the responsibility of graduating professionals who are capable of promoting conceptual and structural changes in the “making” health and amplifying its ethical commitments to society.

Even with recent technological advances and a direction founded on abilities that direct the professional practice in health care, a great portion of the population is still attacked and hit with easily controllable diseases. However, they are neglected and they spike in indicators of morbidity and mortality, resulting from unacceptable sanitary conditions, a characteristic of a population without significant quality of life and lower human development.

In this sense, political-pedagogical projects are starting to be elaborated, with directives that must contemplate the amplified knowledge in health, the diverse forms of disease prevention and not only diagnostic and therapeutic studies, as well as introducing other knowledge, among which those of human and social sciences. “Practices for the promotion of health are pedagogical-

cally comprehended as a fundamental dimension for formulating social policies and their incorporation into curricular directives, contextualization, and potential pedagogical approaches, where interdisciplinarity, integrity, and humanization are placed as pillars of the construction of political-pedagogic.^{3:1}

In this search for the alternative in curricular changes, the University proposes the preparation of professionals with solid scientific, technical, ethical, humanistic, and critical and reflective education towards comprehension of the sickness-health process and a commitment with health promotion processes.

Educating professionals who are socially committed, capable of contributing towards the inversion of the care model towards a health care practice geared towards the population's needs, for the reversion of current indicators, makes it necessary that they have a perception of political, social, economic, cultural, environmental, behavioral, and biologic dimensions and should guide public policies toward health promotion as a proposal to transform excluding relationships and present a fundamental proposal towards the development of society.

The University is aware of its responsibility to society, and as an educational institution, it must integrate different social agents whose work produces positive effects upon the population's health. Its academic formation should respond to public interests and to the common good, which makes it clear that public health care policies cannot be the exclusive control of the State, but should be the result of forging a pact with academia, "from *impoverment* of organized society, from the distribution of rights and duties and obligations between the State and Society, among individuals and collective groups, and between the public and private sectors".^{4:174} All these segments have a responsibility over the repercussions that public health care policies may have and the conditions and quality of life of their populations.

The Amazon area currently presents a challenge to Brazil and to the world, and the responsibility of consolidating a quality University to this region should not remain restricted only to the formal education of health care professionals at undergraduate levels. It has become essential that this area graduate PhDs in health care. This is the great challenge of the Federal University of Pará (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFPA)), which feels the need to sediment research in health care, taking better advantage of the greatest biodiversity on the planet in their backyard. So that actions of this nature may become effective, there is the need for the commitment from Federal University from other regions of the country, an example being the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC)), which through its Nursing Department has signed a partnership with the Federal University of Pará to achieve the InterInstitutional Doctorate in Nursing, with the objective of graduating PhDs and creating international research groups, contributing thus towards the education of researchers in the area of Nursing who will soon be capable of developing research and creating their own graduate programs in the Amazon Region.

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