



your COUNTY COUNCIL



The County Council is an important player in the development of Norrbotten

Hardly any other function of society is as creative and as constantly changing as health care. Better treatment methods and new, more effective drugs are being developed all the time. At the same time, people have a need for security and continuity. They need to come back to a familiar place and they need to be able to see the district nurse and the doctor they know and trust.

This of course makes big demands on the organisation of health care and calls for a functioning dialogue between care consumers and care providers. People feel very deeply about health care issues.

The County Council operates in a reality which is complex in

the full sense of the word. Besides its principal function of health care, the County Council has important obligations in regional development, in the arts and culture, and in education. The County Council is the County's biggest employer and it is an important player in the development of the County and in the creation of a positive image of Norrbotten. There are many ways of telling this story - the story of the patients, of the workers, of the exciting changes that are taking place.

This brochure is an outline of the manifold activities of Norrbotten County Council and of the way it is organised.

Elisabeth Holmgren
CEO

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”A good, abundant, enriching life in a vigorous, growing region”

The Norrbotten County Council (Norrbottens läns landsting) has as its mission to promote the development of Norrbotten County and to improve the quality of life of all its people. It has activities in the fields of health care, dentistry, the arts and culture, education, and regional development. Its aspirations are good public health, good health care, balanced regional development, and conservation of the County’s common resources.

The County Council Assembly is the only political body in which development issues affecting the whole of Norrbotten can be debated by elected representatives from all parts of the County.

Norrbotten is Sweden’s largest and most northerly county. It covers one quarter of the country’s surface area and includes fourteen municipalities (kommuner). Most of the population of 250,000 live near the coast, so much of Norrbotten is sparsely settled. These facts set the parameters for the County Council’s obligations and activities.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REGION

Ever since it was set up in 1863, the Norrbotten County Council has shouldered a major share of the responsibility for developing the County and promoting its long-term competitiveness with other regions. Whether you live in a small inland community or in one of the larger centres on the coast, you have the right to enjoy the same quality of life and an equal standard of health care.

POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

The County Council is led by elected politicians. Elections to the County Council Assembly (landstingsfullmäktige) are held every four years at the same time as the municipal and Riksdag elections.





The activities of the County Council are mostly financed out of taxation revenue.

The County Council Assembly is the County Council's supreme decision-making body. It comprises 71 councillors nominated by the political parties from all parts of the County.

The County Council Assembly is the only political body in which development issues affecting the whole of Norrbotten can be debated by elected political representatives from all parts of the County. It is also the only directly elected political assembly at the county and regional level.

The County Council Assembly may be compared to the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament). It is the place where all the big decisions are made. It sets the overriding goals of the County Council's activities, determines the financial parameters, and sets the county tax rate. Matters to be decided by the County Council Assembly are drafted by the county council executive committee (landstingsstyrelsen). The mission of the executive committee is to manage and coordinate day-to-day activities at the political level. The council's public officers see that they are implemented in practice.

HUNDREDS OF PROFESSIONS

The task of the elected representatives is to decide on the overarching issues. They tell the people who work for the various branches of regional government what is to be done, who it will be done for, to what quality, and at what cost. The county council workers then decide, using their professional knowledge, how the work will be carried out. There are several

hundred occupations working for the regional authority, most of them connected with health care. Nurses, paramedics, occupational therapists, doctors, dentists and dental nurses are a few examples. Other occupations include chemists, psychologists, computer staff, social workers, economists, secretaries, public relations officers, caretakers and cooks.

MORE CARERS NEEDED

Many county council employees are due to retire in the next ten years, while there is a growing need for qualified staff. At the same time, the total workforce will be shrinking. Around 2,500 new people will need to be recruited, mainly in health and dental care.

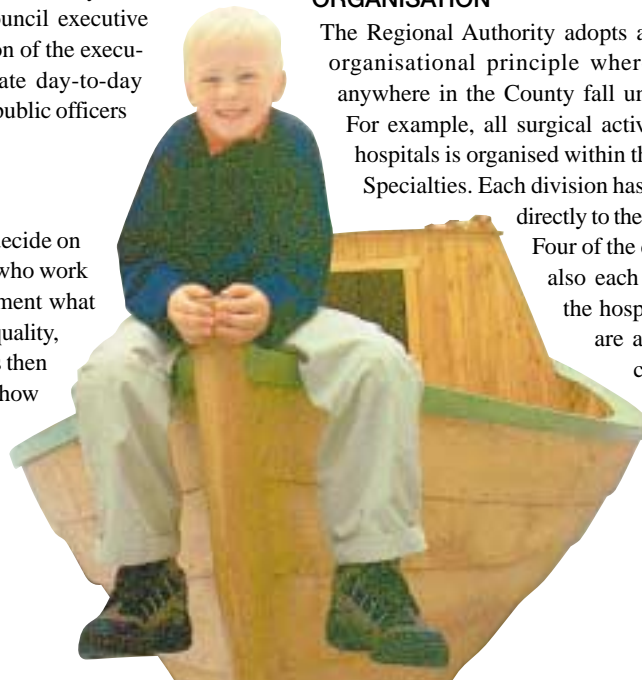
Details of vacant positions can be found at www.nll.se/jobb

ORGANISATION

The Regional Authority adopts a modern, county-wide organisational principle whereby similar activities anywhere in the County fall under the same division.

For example, all surgical activity at all the County's hospitals is organised within the division of Operative Specialties. Each division has a manager who reports directly to the County Council's CEO.

Four of the divisional managers are also each responsible for one of the hospitals in the County and are assisted in this by local coordinators.





The County Council has nearly 7,700 employees, 6,500 of whom work in the care professions. Four out of five of the County Council's employees are women.

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Primary care

The foundation of the health care system is primary care and the medical centres that provide it. The medical centre (vårdcentral) is the first place you go when you are sick or need help with some health-related issue.

Each municipality has at least one medical centre for the delivery of primary care. Medical centres employ district medical officers, district nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and counsellors, among other professionals. With their close proximity to people's homes and with the broad range of skills at



Primary care helps people throughout their life - from the baby being weighed and measured at the child health centre to the adult or elderly person who needs tests, medication, physiotherapy, or any other of the services that primary care provides.

their command, the medical centres are able to investigate and treat most of the patients presenting there for medical care.

The medical centres in localities that are far from the nearest hospital act as "mini-hospitals", dealing with emergencies such as bone fractures, cardiac arrest, and road accidents.

All the medical centres are open during the daytime. The staff also make home visits to the elderly, patients who have had recent surgery, the disabled, and children. In the evenings and on weekends and holidays emergency centres are open, while at night support is provided for severely ill patients in their homes. The emergency centres are meant for urgent problems that cannot wait until the regular medical centre is open, such as acute infections, injuries, and asthma attacks.

ADVICE, SUPPORT, AND APPLIANCES

The functionally disabled are a high-priority category of patients. Primary care provides them with advice, training, and aids for coping with everyday life or for rehabilitation after an injury.

LSS Advice and Support Teams help people suffering from a permanent functional handicap to cope with the difficulties of everyday life. LSS stands for the Support and Services Act (lagen om stöd och service), a civil rights law enacted in 1993. The services delivered by these teams supplement those provided by the health and social welfare systems. They cover jobs, finance, housing, and assistance in dealing with the authorities.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

The world is in constant change. New policies are made, economic conditions change, scientific research advances. As a result, the County Council's activities must also change and

**In 2002 the County's
physiotherapists treated
123,000 people.**

adapt continually in order to deliver the maximum care for the money spent. Primary care is always working to improve accessibility and improve the quality of care delivered to the patient.

Primary care in Norrbotten is delivered by 33 medical centres and five LSS Advice and Support teams.

- ▶ Better accessibility is an important objective for primary care. A new telephone queuing system has been introduced at most of the County's medical centres to help patients contact their centre without long waits. Instead of the patient ringing up and holding, the receptionist rings up the patient at an agreed time.
- ▶ Norrbotten primary care is working actively to reduce waiting times at medical centres.
- ▶ Norrbotten's primary care is the first in the country to train its staff to take better care of patients with stress-related symptoms. The training course is offered to doctors, nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Based on cognitive psychotherapy, the course was developed at the Karolinska Institute.

Hospital care

Hospitals provide diagnosis, care and treatment that require more specialised skills and equipment. Most patients present at a hospital after being referred by a medical centre, a district nurse, or other care provider.

All five hospitals in Norrbotten County have clinics that can treat the most frequently occurring types of injury and disease. In complicated or unusual cases it may be necessary to refer a patient to another hospital inside or outside the County for treatment. Most patients treated in hospital have been referred from a medical centre. It is only in the case of emergencies requiring immediate attention, such as heart attack or a broken bone, that the patient comes straight to the hospital casualty unit.

- ▶ Medical progress means shorter waiting times. With advances in technology, many surgical interventions are gentler than they used to be and the patient's stay in hospital is shorter. More effective drugs enable patients to be treated at home instead of in hospital.
- ▶ Garnis Rehabcenter at Boden, affiliated with Sunderby Hospital, is a complement to the County Council's rehabilitation programme. It helps with the rehabilitation of patients suffering from pain, neurological and rheumatic disorders. The focus of rehabilitation at Garnis is on the patient's return to work.





The Liaison Centre at Sunderby Hospital not only manages day-to-day activities but also coordinates emergency response to major accidents. The Liaison Centre is in direct contact with ambulances and transmits information such as ECGs straight to the hospital, which can then make preparations for treatment even before the patient has arrived.

RADIOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

Every hospital has departments of radiology and laboratory medicine. They provide out examinations and analyses which help the other departments to diagnose disease.

ADULT PSYCHIATRY

Patients with mental disorders are often seen first in primary care. The medical centre can offer first aid in the form of counselling and medication, but if this is not enough the patient is referred to Adult Psychiatry.

Adult Psychiatry is mainly an out-patient service which is available in all fourteen municipalities in the County. For patients requiring more intensive treatment several localities have a form of enhanced out-patient care with the option of overnight stays Monday to Friday. This is known as intermediate care (mellan-

The hospitals' specialties are: General Surgery, Urology, Emergency Care, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Ear-Nose-Throat-Jaw, Ophthalmology, Internal Medicine, Rehabilitation/Rheumatology, Paediatrics, Emergency and Basic Psychiatry, Radiology, and Laboratory Medicine.

Sunderby Hospital is the local hospital for Boden and Luleå and also serves as the county hospital for all of Norrbotten. Opened in 1999, it features innovation in care and technology.



vård). Intermediate care is provided by units which each specialise in different types of mental illness. In-patient care is concentrated to some of the larger hospitals.

Adult psychiatry, based on science and proven experience, seeks to offer the mentally ill patient specialised psychiatric care so as to enable them as far as possible to be in control of their own life and participate in the ordinary life of the community. Investigation, treatment and rehabilitation are carried out by multi-disciplinary teams including counsellors, occupational therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, nurses and mental nursing auxiliaries. All the team members contribute to the treatment and care of the patient.

Three of the County's hospitals have specialised adult psychiatric departments with psychiatric emergency units. The County also has a forensic psychiatric ward and a long-stay rehabilitation programme for patients sentenced under the Forensic Psychiatric Care Act (lagen om rättspsykiatrisk vård).

Hospital care is guided by a holistic approach and county-wide procedures.

SHORTER STAYS

Hospital stays are getting shorter. Medical investigation is making it possible to offer the patient care without the need to keep them in hospital. Day surgery is becoming more common. New and more effective drugs can render unnecessary advanced operations and long periods off work.

The County Council's internal computer network allows efficient communication between medical centres and hospitals. Information moves swiftly and efficiently throughout the health care chain, benefiting patients and personnel.

THE PATIENT'S BEST INTEREST

To reduce waiting times, some patients may be operated on at a hospital within the County other than their local hospital. Extra resources have been allocated to shorten waiting lists for knee and hip surgery, cataract and incontinence treatment, hearing aid testing, and physiotherapy.



The County has five hospitals: Sunderby Hospital, Piteå Älvdal Hospital, Kalix Hospital, Gällivare Hospital, and Kiruna Hospital.

In cases where the County's own resources are not adequate, patients are offered treatment through other county councils. This can happen with complicated interventions such as kidney transplants or IVF (infertility treatment).

You have the right to seek emergency treatment anywhere in Sweden. For scheduled health care you need a referral from your home county council.

INFECTION PREVENTION

The Infection Prevention Act (smittskyddslagen) makes each County Council responsible for taking measures to prevent infection. An infection prevention officer plans, organises and manages the county's infection prevention programme so as to minimise the spread of diseases classified as constituting a public danger as well as other infectious diseases. The officer also provides public information and advice on the prevention of infection.



- ▶ The neonatal unit at Sunderby Hospital runs a Newborn Individualised Developmental Care and Assessment Programme (NIDCAP). Premature babies need a great deal of support and a specially designed environment in order to thrive and develop. The rooms of the unit are designed so that the babies wake up and go to sleep in peaceful surroundings. The parents are involved in their care at an early stage.
- ▶ The care of stroke victims has been improved by the institution of county-wide procedures and closer collaboration with municipal authorities. Rehabilitation can now be started earlier, and recurrent training enables patients to cope better with everyday living. The interventions must be of equal standard whether the patient lives in a town or in the country.
- ▶ Since autumn 2004 Sunderby Hospital has implemented a new program which will mean shorter waiting times and shorter journeys for patients with coronary artery disease. Investigations are carried out at the hospital and patients are offered treatment including balloon angioplasty.

Dentistry

The mission of the National Dental Service is to offer the County's children and young people free dental care and to supply the dentistry needs of asylum seekers, the elderly, and the functionally disabled. The Service also provides general and specialist dental care for the County's adult population.

There are National Dental Service clinics in all the County's municipalities. With over thirty general dental clinics, you are never far from the dentist whatever part of the County you live in.

A HEALTHY MOUTH AT ALL AGES

Most Norrbotten residents are in contact with the National Dental Service. A child's first visit takes place around their first birthday, and from the age of three all children are called in for regular

- ▶ The National Dental Service is implementing a new IT system. The goal is to have a computer in every treatment room on which the team can look up the patient's dental status, view X-rays, and make appointments. The system will be interoperable with the County's general Healthcare Administration System (VAS), allowing rapid access to patient records. When the system is fully implemented, Norrbotten will have the most modern IT system in Sweden's National Dental Service.
- ▶ "Dentistry without borders" is the name of an EU project that brings together the Swedish and Finnish sectors of the border town of Karesuando. Instead of patients on the Finnish side having to travel tens of kilometres to the nearest Finnish dental clinic, they just cross over the border to the clinic on the Swedish side. This not only saves resources, it advances the region's development in harmony with the County Council's general objectives. At the end of the project the arrangement will be made permanent.



Dental care is free of charge for all between the ages of three and nineteen.

appointments. Dental care is free of charge for all children and young people between the ages of three and nineteen, whether they use the National Dental Service or see a private dentist. Seven out of ten continue using the National Dental Service as adults. The National Dental Service cooperates with the health service and with other social institutions. It works with child health centres, schools and municipal public health committees to improve the community's oral health. Statistics show that young people in Norrbotten County increasingly have better teeth and that older people are keeping their own teeth for longer.

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

Dental specialists visit the County's dental clinics regularly to upgrade their competence and to deliver better service to people living in smaller communities. This program brings specialised dental care closer to the patient while at the same time improving cooperation and effectively spreading new knowledge. The competence of dental nurses has also been upgraded: more dental nurses are treating patients themselves as members of teams that include dentists and dental hygienists.

STUDY ENCOURAGED

Norrbotten needs more dentists and dental hygienists. The National Dental Service encourages young people interested in qualifying in dentistry by offering scholarships, personal contacts, summer vacation jobs etc.

Seventy percent of all adults in Norrbotten use the National Dental Service.



The arts, culture and education

The arts and culture are of great importance for the County's development and attractiveness as well as for its people's identity, health, and living environment. The County Council sponsors a variety of activities to encourage participation in the arts, both as audience and as creative participants.

THE COUNTY'S ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The County Council runs the Norrbotten Museum and Norrbotten Music. With the Municipality of Luleå it also runs the Norrbotten Theatre and the Norrbotten County Library.

The County's arts and cultural institutions arrange concerts, exhibitions, performances, cultural heritage activities, projects and school programmes all over the County and provide services to the people of Norrbotten within their respective fields of activity.



Cultural activities for children and young people are a priority, receiving half of the committed resources.

The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs (Statens kulturråd) provides funding to all the county institutions. Over 200,000 people each year use the services of the county's arts and cultural institutions. Over half of them live outside Luleå.

ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS TO ALL THE COUNTY

Each year the County Council allocates funding grants to organisations and programmes in the arts, culture and sport, to youth and pensioner organisations, and to adult education. There are county advisory officers in areas including the visual arts, dance, literature, home crafts, theatre, and youth music. Grants can also be given to individual projects. Special consideration is given to priority areas in the regional growth programme and to the target group children and young people. The greater part of the grants goes to county-wide projects.

Each year a number of scholarships are awarded: the Rubus Arcticus Scholarship, a sports scholarship, and a merit scholarship.

The arts and culture enhance the Norrbotten living environment and add to the county's attractions.

NATURAL RESOURCE SCHOOLS

The County Council runs Grans Naturbruksskola at Öjebyn and Kalix Naturbruksgymnasium jointly with the county's municipal councils. These schools offer the upper secondary school natural resource use programme, comprising agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, sawmilling, hunting and game conservation. They are attended by over 300 students each academic year. The schools also offer adult education courses on a contract basis and take part in regional development projects.

Every krona the County Council spends on the arts and culture brings almost three kronor back to the County.

- ▶ Konstkrets Norr is a joint project between artists and businesses in Norrbotten which among other things sponsors the hiring out of original works of art. Artists agree to exhibit their works on a business's premises and also give talks and workplace visits. The project, funded by the EU, was initiated by Norrbotten's County Artist.
- ▶ Dans i Nord, a dance programme run by the Norrbotten County Council and Piteå Municipality, operates all over the County, providing dance activities in schools, dance performances (by the Barents Dance Ensemble among others), and training courses for teachers and professional dancers. This programme has put dance on the map in Norrbotten and has given many young people in sparsely settled parts of the county a meaningful leisure-time activity. Dans i Nord has been funded by the EU for a period of three years.
- ▶ Granparken, a park neighbouring Grans Naturbruksskola, opened in the summer of 2003. It has a Children's Zoo with animals of the indigenous Swedish "Landrace" breeds, market gardens, an agricultural museum and a restaurant specialising in Norrbotten cuisine. There are also overnight and conference facilities. The park, an EU project, is a joint venture by the County Council and Piteå Municipality.

Regional development

The County Council works on many levels to promote the growth and attractiveness of Norrbotten County. It helps with the development of small and medium-sized businesses, it works to improve transport and communications, and it promotes international exchanges. Most of the programmes are managed jointly with other stakeholders in the county.

Since Sweden joined the EU the importance of the regions has been increasing, while the differences between them have been growing more marked. People are moving from the country to the cities where the jobs are. In regions with declining population, people must work still harder in order to survive. In this situation, the County Council is undertaking a range of efforts to make Norrbotten more competitive with other regions.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The foundation of regional development is a smoothly functioning infrastructure in which sea, air, road and rail modes form an efficient, coordinated transportation system. The County Council helps to create the conditions for a quality bus

network through its participation in Länstrafiken i Norrbotten AB, jointly owned by the county and municipal councils.

Another of the County Council's tasks is to promote the development of air travel between Sweden's four northernmost counties and within the Barents region.

The County Council also represents the region's interests in regard to rail traffic. The Norrbotnia Line is a long-term investment and one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Norrland.

The County Council is the only democratically led body having specific responsibility for the County.

- ▶ Cooperation is necessary to better manage the County's common resources and promote its growth. With this in mind, the County Council is looking to set up a cooperative body together with the municipalities. It is a prerequisite that all of the municipalities participate.
- ▶ In the future it will be possible to monitor a patient's pulse, blood pressure and ECG by means of a sphygmometer connected to a web server. This technology will enable doctors to examine their patients by computer. This is one of the types of research and product development that the County Council supports.





BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The County Council assists small and medium-sized enterprises with advice, contacts, training and finance through ALMI-Företagspartner. The objects of this programme are to encourage new enterprise, develop existing enterprises, and strengthen the long-term position of the County in relation to other regions. ALMI is jointly owned by the Government and the County Council.

TOURISM

Tourism is a big and important industry in Norrbotten. In order to promote its further development the County Council supports the Norrbotten/Lapland industry organisation, which engages in product and destination development in the County.

FILM

Filmpool Nord, a company owned jointly by the county and muni-

cipal councils, makes film and television productions and promotes the development of film, television and multimedia in the County and in the Barents Region.

Success factors for Norrbotten are cooperation and openness.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The County Council together with the County's municipalities and other stakeholders has set up the company IT Norrbotten to develop jobs and business in Norrbotten. The company's mission is to be an engine for the development of spearhead technology and business-driving IT projects in the County.

RESEARCH

The County Council supports research and product development in the health care sector. This has resulted in a number of successful participations in companies specialising in medical technology among other fields. Examples of products manufactured include nose drops, packaging for perishable drugs, and incontinence products.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Openness to the world around us is vital if Norrbotten is to continue to be an attractive and competitive region. In the interests of county development, the County Council participates in European networks - the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Conference of Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) - as well as local Swedish networks: Europaforum Norra Sverige and the county's international committee.



Ancillary Services

In order to free up the health service and the National Dental Service to concentrate on their core activity of looking after patients, the County Council has set up a joint ancillary services organisation. Its 600 employees work in a variety of areas.

Catering Services provides catering for Sunderby and Piteå Hospitals. The remaining hospitals and medical centres with overnight beds buy their catering from outside catering firms or from their municipality. Property Services provides cleaning for Gällivare, Kiruna, Kalix and Piteå Hospitals. In other parts of the county the County Council buys these services from external contractors or the local municipality.

Ancillary Services handles the procurement of goods and

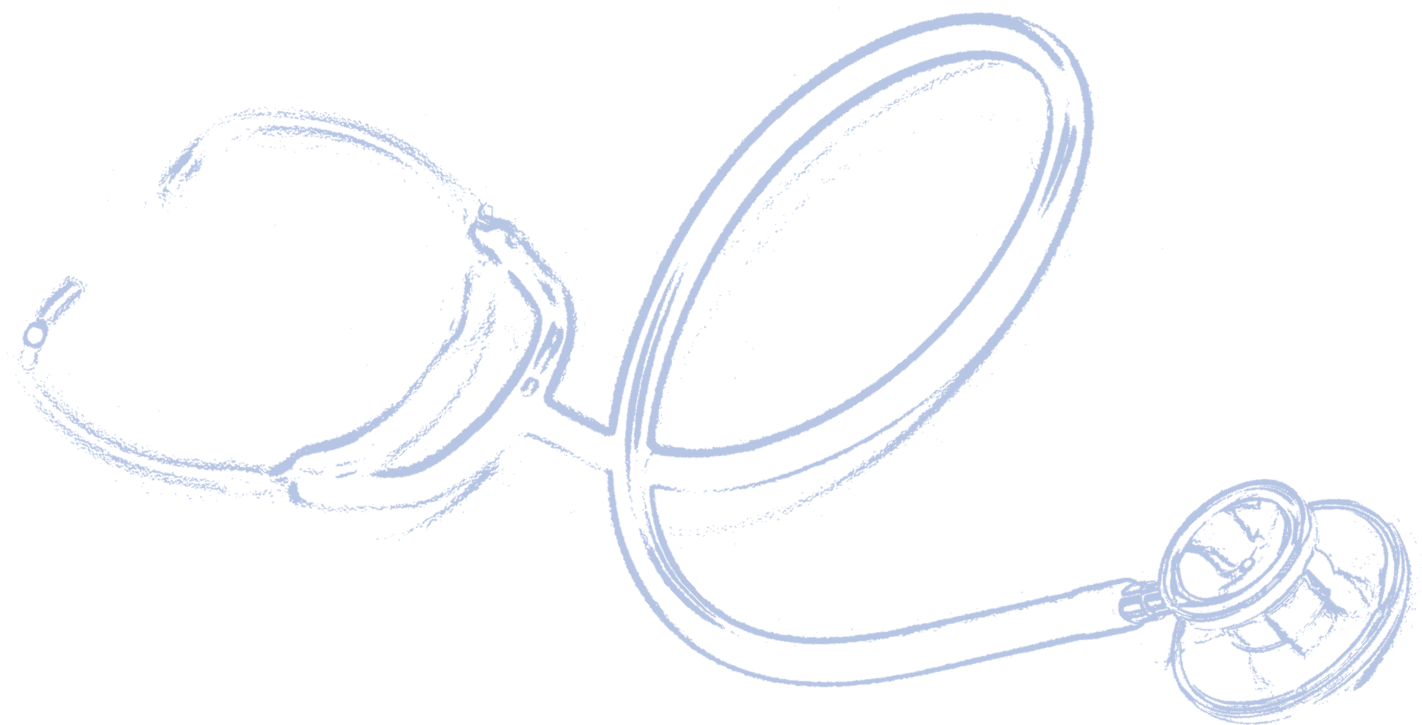
services for the County Council. Procurements in 2003 totalled SEK 2.4 million, and a substantial percentage of this business went to suppliers in the county.

Ancillary Services also supplies consumables and aids to the County Council's own activities and to the municipalities in the County area. Other functions are the administration of the County's payroll and invoicing systems, the procurement of material and services, the drafting of contracts, and running patient hotels and libraries.

IT Services looks after the County Council's common computer systems, including the health care system VAS, administrative systems for payroll and accounting, and others.

Other important tasks of Ancillary Services are the servicing of medical and other technical equipment, the operation and maintenance of the County Council's own properties, design of new or renovated premises, and the provision of janitorial services.





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