

Klaipeda Region, Lithuania

Sailing-boat Meridianas,
Klaipeda city

General overview

The Klaipeda Region, situated in the western part of Lithuania, includes seven municipalities and has a population of 317 471 (beginning 2018), representing 11.3% of the Lithuanian population. The territory of the Region covers 5209 km² and the average population density is 61/km² (1).

The main city in the Region, which is also called Klaipeda, is the third-largest in Lithuania and has the only sea port in the country. One of the three largest health-care centres in Lithuania is also found in Klaipeda city where four multiprofile hospitals provide the highest level of qualified, specialized services. The city participates actively in international health projects, such as the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, which it joined in 2011.

Klaipeda city is the first in Lithuania to be awarded the European Capitals and Cities of Sport Federation (ACES Europe) title, “European City of Sport 2018”. Currently, it has almost 100 facilities for sport, leisure and wellness, 5 professional sports clubs, and 5 sports schools for children. The Klaipeda City Municipality was the first in the country to introduce swimming lessons for pupils in the second grade.

The average life expectancy in the Region is 75.6 years (70.4 years for men and 80.5 years for women) (1). In 2016, the infant mortality rate was 3.6‰ while the average for the country was 4.5‰. The crude death rate for the Region was 13.7‰, the three leading causes being cardiovascular diseases, malignant neoplasms and external causes (2).

The health system in Lithuania is funded through the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund, which comprises contributions from employers and employees, as well as revenue created through state and social insurance activity. Public health is funded from state and municipal budgets. The municipalities support health care in their respective territories by providing additional funding for basic medical aid and health care for pregnant women, unemployed people, people with disabilities, children under 16 years of age, orphans under 18 years of age, and people who have reached retirement age. Lithuania provides free state-funded health care to all citizens and registered long-term residents. Private health care is also available.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for implementing government policy and controls

Lithuania's health-care system at the central level. Expenditure related to health care accounts for 6.7% of the gross domestic product (3). Political and financial autonomy and responsibility for health care have been delegated to the municipal level. In the Klaipeda Region, the municipal councils are responsible for health care, which is administered by the Health Care Department and implemented either by public health bureaus or primary-health-care centres, depending on which is responsible for the type of health care in question. Public health services at the municipal level are provided by the public health bureaus, their main functions being: health monitoring at the municipal level; health promotion in kindergartens, schools and communities; and the provision of youth-friendly health-care services.



Strengths

The strengths of the Klaipeda Region include:

- ✓ its favourable geographic location for economic development as the northernmost ice-free port on the east coast of the Baltic Sea;
- ✓ its well-developed physical and social infrastructure;
- ✓ the high recreational potential of its natural resources: geothermal water and the Baltic Sea;
- ✓ the presence of highly qualified health-care professionals in the Region, from specialists in public health to those working in personal health care.



Aspirations

The Klaipeda Region is aiming to:

- ✓ increase the involvement of the private sector and nongovernmental organizations in health politics;
- ✓ strengthen public health at the municipal level;
- ✓ develop integrated health and social services.

Challenges

The main challenges in the Klaipeda Region are:

- ✓ the insufficiency of the resources allocated for health care and, especially, public health;
- ✓ health inequality in urban/rural areas, gender-related inequality, inequality related to socially disadvantaged groups, and socioeconomic inequality in access to health care;
- ✓ a decline in the population growth rate and stagnant birth rate.

Potential areas of collaboration

The Klaipeda Region is interested in collaborating with other regions on:

- ✓ strengthening cross-sectoral partnership for health at the local level and public participation in planning and implementing health interventions;
- ✓ reducing health inequalities and improving access to comprehensive, quality health-care services;
- ✓ developing innovative programmes on promoting public health at the municipal level.

Working groups

The Klaipeda Region is interested in participating in working groups on:

- ✓ the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (4)/equity;
- ✓ women's/men's health;
- ✓ the all-of-government approach/intersectoral action.

People active in the Regions for Health Network (RHN)

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