

Continued membership growth, increased activity and visibility in 2017/2018

2017 marked the second year - in a row that the association saw a membership increase of 7%.

Training of association representatives, renegotiation of and establishment of new member benefits, increased visibility on social media and member activities customised for different target groups within our organization have been our focus this last year. One of the year's high points was our arranging for prime minister Erna Solberg to open the celebration of World Pharmacists Day on September 25th. (The theme for the arrangement was, among other things, establishing the global vaccine alliance Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health in Oslo, which has been one of the Solberg government's prestige projects).

Membership growth in 2016 made it possible to further increase recruiting with a recruitment campaign from August to December 2017. As a consequence of increased membership, the number of requests for legal support has also increased, which led to the appointment of a new attorney for the association in the spring of 2018.

At the central board's last meeting before summer (May 30th), the association's new meeting premises '1858' (named for the year the Norwegian Association of Pharmacists was founded) were inaugurated. These premises will make it possible for the association to have more 'in house' arrangements, as well as leasing the space to others.

Below follows a summary of the year since the last meeting of the Nordic pharmacist Union in Iceland, August 2017.

Changes in the outside world where the Norwegian Association of Pharmacists (NFF) operates

Several medicines evaluated by health technology assessment and financed by the Regional Health Authority

That responsibility for financing shall be connected with responsibility for treatment has been an important principle in financing medicines in Norway in recent years. As a consequence, the responsibility for the financing of several medicines has been transferred from Social Security (Folketrygden) to the Regional Health Authority (hospitals that are organised into four regional health authorities covering the entire country.) Beginning January 1, 2018, all new medicines must also undergo Health Technology Assessment (HTA).

Drug delivery

Medicines with associated risk minimization procedures (previously referred to as pharmacist only medicines—Farmasøytutlevering") were made possible through a legislative amendment. Risk minimization procedures entail establishing particular requirements for the sale of prescription medicines so that they can be exempted from prescription status. These procedures allow non-prescription medicines that are being evaluated for prescription status to remain non-prescription. This legislative amendment added that the pharmaceutical industry itself must apply to have medicines included in this plan. As of today, there are no officially approved medicines with associated risk minimization procedures.

Remunerated patient care services in pharmacies

Instruction on the correct use of inhalers (“Inhalasjonssjekk”) and instruction at the initiation of drug treatment (“Medisinstart”)

Instruction on the correct use of inhalers was introduced as the first publicly paid pharmaceutical service in Norwegian pharmacies in March 2016. Over the course of the first year, 50,000 asthma and Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients received instruction on the correct use of inhalers in pharmacies. The Norwegian Pharmacy Association’s evaluation of the service showed that 7 out of 10 patients were using inhalers incorrectly before instruction was given. The evaluation also showed that the service provides a notable and significant reduction in error, and that pharmacy managers and service pharmacists (tjenestefarmasøyter) felt that providing the service worked well in everyday use.

‘Medicine Start’ (Medisinstart) was implemented in Norwegian pharmacies on May 2, 2018. This service is directed at patients with cardiovascular disease starting medication with oral anticoagulants, blood pressure lowering agents and/or cholesterol lowering medicines. The aim was to give patients more information on the use of these medicines, increase safety and motivation to follow the course of treatment, thereby contributing to medicines’ being taken in accordance with doctors’ prescriptions.

Doctors can request start-of-care guidance (“Medisinstart”) for their patients, but patients can also request the service themselves in pharmacies. One month after launch, 470 completed conversations were conducted (see graphic below).



Illustration from The Norwegian Pharmacy Association

(<http://www.apotek.no/nyhetsarkiv/statistikk/medisinstart-er-kommet-godt-i-gang-470-samtaler-i-mai>)

Vaccinations in pharmacies

During fall 2017, Vitus Apotek Pharmacy, one of the country’s three large pharmacy chains, introduced a trial program providing influenza vaccines in pharmacies. The theme ‘Vaccination in the pharmacy’ was discussed in several regional meetings and at the association’s annual meeting

(Supervisory council meeting/Representantskapsmøtet). As a preventive measure intended to prevent illness and limit the use of antibiotics, the NFF believe that increased vaccination against influenza and pneumonia is a good public health measure. Vaccination in pharmacies can contribute to an increased rate of vaccination.

At the beginning of April 2018, Apotek 1 introduced an offer for travel vaccines in (24) selected pharmacies in cooperation with the net-based medical service [Eyr](#). With the help of the Eyr app and a video consultation with a doctor, customers can be advised as to which vaccines they should take. The prescription is then retrieved in the pharmacy from the central prescription database (“Reseptformidleren”) and administered by qualified health personnel.

Municipal pharmacists on the political agenda

During the past year, proposals have been made regarding which requirements for health-related competence municipalities should have in place for their health and care services. Professions that were specifically named include doctors, nurses, dieticians and occupational therapists, but not pharmacists. The association wants to work for pharmacists and pharmacist competency in municipalities politically. As a part of this work, plans have been made to chart today’s about 15 municipal pharmacists in order to learn more about organization and responsibilities.

Important events that NFF has arranged or participated in

PHARMACY MANAGERS’ DAY (“Apotekerdagen”)

August 31st was the third annual Pharmacy Manager’s Day. There were a record number of attendees, with more than 60 pharmacy managers from across the country participating. The event is a part of the association’s increased commitment to pharmacy managers and is a chain-neutral meeting place with professional talks and the opportunity to exchange experiences. Pharmacy Managers’ Day was open both to members and non-members, and quickly reached capacity registration with a waiting list for further attendees.

PRODUCTION DAY

Production Day was arranged for the first time on September 21st in the Oslo Cancer Cluster Innovation Park. The event was open to all and had 120 attendees. The target group for the event was people who work with or who are interested in the production of medicines. Contributions from public drug authorities, NGOs and pharma companies with production facilities in Norway – both established and start-up phase - were on the agenda for the evening.

This success was repeated on June 7, 2018, and is now a permanent event for the association and a central element of the commitment to increase the association’s relevance for pharmacists working in the pharmaceutical industry

WORLD PHARMACY DAY AND PHARMACIST OF THE YEAR

Prime Minister Erna Solberg was present for the official opening of World Pharmacists’ Day on September 25th. This year’s theme was, ‘Global effort gives medicine to the world,’ and the event was a collaboration between NFF and Pharmacists Without Borders (FUG).

After the Prime Minister’s introduction, the director of the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Camilla Stoltenberg, spoke about the establishment of CEPI, a global coalition for the prevention of

epidemics and pandemics. Gunnstein Norheim, CEPI, explained how Norwegian vaccine research can contribute to CEPI's goals, and what the establishment of the centre means for Norwegian researchers. Finally, focus was placed on increased global access to medicines and the responsibilities the pharmaceutical industry has to society in a two-part presentation by former board member Knut Kjær and Jayasree K. Iyer, CEO of the Access to Medicines Foundation.



PHARMACIST OF THE YEAR

During the event, the prize for Pharmacist of the Year was awarded to Gunnstein Norheim.

Pharmacist of the Year is a distinction awarded to a working pharmacist who has contributed to strengthening, developing or reinforcing the pharmacy's and pharmacist's role in society, and who through his or her work stands out as a role model for other pharmacists.

Gunnstein Norheim received the award for his contribution to development of a highly effective Ebola vaccine. Among other things, the international team he worked with conducted clinical trials of the vaccine candidate at record speed during the ongoing Ebola epidemic in West Africa during the spring and summer of 2014.



FROM THE SEA TO MEDICINES

On October 20th, NFF arranged a breakfast meeting in cooperation with Naturviterne (an organization of ca. 7,000 members with higher natural science education and experience). The theme for the event was the ocean as the source of raw ingredients for the (medicine-) industry of

the future in Norway. Framework guidelines, examples of promising medicine candidates in the clinical testing phase and visions of a potential heir to the oil industry were themes for those who gave talks.

PHARMACY DAYS (Farmasidagene)

Pharmacy Days were arranged on November 9-10. The President of NFF is a permanent member of the program committee, and also participated actively in, among other things, a panel debate on the ways in which technology can help pharmacists to improve patient care.

NFF - attended with a record big and brand new exhibition stand, with a focus on recruiting new members.

Activities such as a quiz and a selfie competition contributed to a high number of visits to the association's stand. A total of 26 new members signed up during the event.



MEETING FOR REPRESENTATIVES (TILLITSVALGTE) AND THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN LONDON

Practical political advocacy, exemplified by participation in a reception at the House of Common, was on the program when the executive board and government representatives visited London December 3-6, 2017. The reception marked the launch of the 'A Safer Pharmacy Charter' campaign, under the direction of our British sister organization, PDA (Pharmacist Defence Association). The campaign focuses on working conditions for pharmacists in pharmacies as a means of improving patient safety. In addition, there were contributions from representatives from The European Medicines Agency, as well as a status update on the work situation for our colleagues in British pharmacies.



TARIFF CONFERENCE

NFF held the year's tariff conference from March 7-8. This is the most important meeting place for all NFFs representatives and is a run-up to and preparation for the year's salary settlement. The year 2018 was a year for the bi-annual tariff settlements, which means that all our tariff agreements were up for textual renegotiation, in addition to negotiations on finances. The professional theme of the conference was "Communication and professional soundness".



PHARMACIST 'ASPIRE' DAY ("Apotekerspiredagen")

In order to reach young pharmacists who are thinking about or wondering what an average day as a pharmacy manager is like, NFF arranged the first Pharmacist 'Aspire' Day on April 14th. About 25 people attended that Saturday in April to hear experienced pharmacists talk about challenges and opportunities. The event was well received and provides the basis for inviting young pharmacists to future meetings with the same theme.

MEETING ABOUT ADHD

On April 24th, NFF held a meeting on the medical treatment of ADHD. There are major differences between counties in Norway in prescribing drugs for the treatment of the disease, which points to different interpretations and practices.

Around 100 participants met to hear about the background of the ADHD treatment guidelines, as well as a clinician who criticized the knowledge base these guidelines are based upon.

The meeting was live streamed and also made available after the event to those who were unable to attend the actual meeting. Having now purchased our own equipment, NFF is committed to providing live streaming of several future events.

JOB MARKET

Pharmacies

The growth rate of pharmacies in Norway appears to be stable, with 33-34 new pharmacies opening each year. In 2017, the total number passed 900. There are still many vacancies in community pharmacies, and between 60 to 75 positions are advertised in the Norwegian Pharmaceutical Journal, NFT. On average, there are about 100 vacancies in Norway at all times.

<http://www.apotek.no/fakta-og-ressurser/statistikk-for-2016/1--apotek/1-1-apotek-i-norge>

Hospitals/Hospital pharmacies

Increasingly, pharmaceutical services are being sought after in different departments in hospitals.

Pharmaceutical services in hospitals are mainly carried out by pharmacists employed in hospital pharmacies. The total number of hospital pharmacies has been stable over the last 32 years.

Industry- and consultancy branch

Due to the downsizing, fewer people have been employed in the industry. But there is still a need for pharmacists in the industry, for example, as Qualified Person (QP). There has also been an increase in small start-up companies, and in CROs (consultancy and staffing companies for the industry).

Following the establishment of the main agreement with The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (Norway's largest employer organization) NHO, in 2016, several corporate groups and some tariff agreements have been established in the sector.

Government agencies

The Norwegian Medicines Agency (SLV), the Norwegian Directorate of Health (with HELFO, The Norwegian Health Economics Administration), and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health are the major governmental workplaces for pharmacists. NFF has also experienced good growth in the number of members employed at educational institutions.

In parallel with the Norwegian Medicines Agency moving to new premises at Helsfyr in December 2016, a major reorganization process was implemented. It was well-handled by union representatives, who followed up both organizationally and personally. Major reorganization is challenging, both for elected representatives and employees, and although there were changes in placement and tasks, no one was made redundant in the process.

By contrast, The Norwegian Directorate for Health and The Norwegian Institute of Public Health were both subject to budget cuts in 2016, which resulted in redundancies. NFF's association representatives followed the process in close collaboration with the chief association representatives of the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations, Akademikerne. (NFF has a collaboration agreement with the Federation). These restructuring processes were completed in 2017. In 2017, the secretariat for the *The National System for Managed Introduction of New Health Technologies within the Specialist Health Service in Norway* (Nye Metoder) was moved from the Norwegian Directorate for Health (Helsedirektoratet) to the Southern and Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority (Helse Sør-Øst). The transfer was carried out as a business acquisition.

In connection with the establishment of Health Complaints, the national organ for complaints in the healthcare system in Bergen (Helseklage), the handling of complaints was moved from HELFO. In the process, employers waived the relocation requirement and gave a guarantee of continued employment for those who did not wish to move. Toward the end of 2017, Helfo began a new process aimed at reducing the number of service locations. There are pharmacists employed at four of the offices that are in danger of being closed.

Municipal pharmacists

Several municipalities have employed their own pharmacists and the number continues to grow each year. As of today, municipalities connected to the country's largest cities have employed municipal pharmacists. These include Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Drammen, Ullensaker, Oslo, Tromsø, Hemnes and Kristiansand municipalities. Other municipalities hire pharmacists on a part-time basis or for specific assignments.

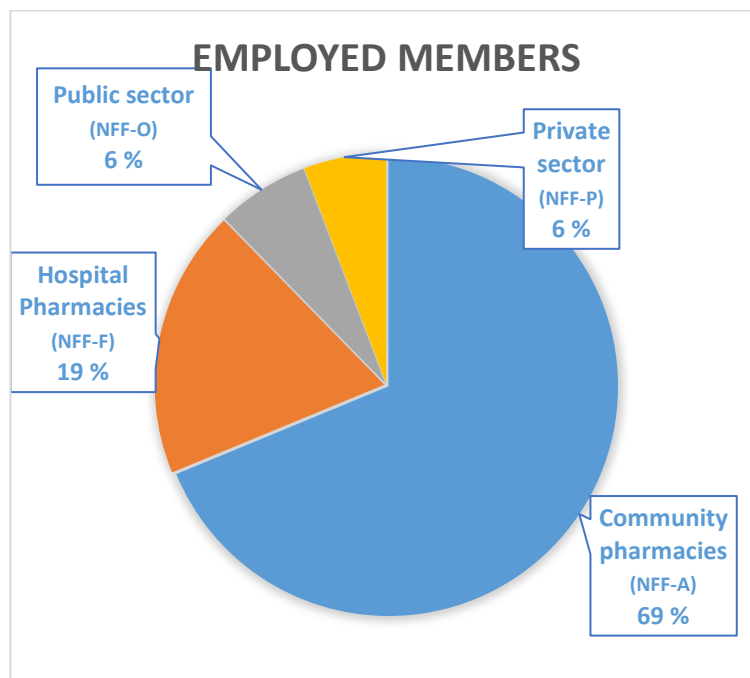
Salary growth

The wage settlement for 2018 was strongly influenced by pressure on the Norwegian economy, although there are signs of improvement, and first-round trade negotiations ended with an official

framework for an annual wage growth of 2.8%. The finances in the settlements NFF has been involved with have largely been settled along the trade negotiation's framework.

Membership numbers and general development

In 2017, NFF had a 7% increase in membership for the second consecutive year. At the end of the year, the association had 3944 members, of which 3138 are employed. There were 524 student members, the student membership category having grown the most in recent years.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

RETHOS; New guidelines for pharmacy education

The Ministry of Education and Research ("Kunnskapsdepartementet") has initiated work to ensure that graduates of health and social education meet the demands of the future in health and social services. Program groups, which will reflect the occupational group's employers, have been created to develop new educational guidelines. NFF is following the group's work and has given input. Communication – with the patient, but also cross-professional with other health professions – and digital capability are among the skills NFF believes the new guidelines should focus on. Scheduled implementation is in 2020.

FEVU

NFF's postgraduate and continuing education system (FEVU) has been in operation since 2012. The guidelines for the allocation of FEVU points were revised at the beginning of the year and, in the new year, registration of e-learning courses in the system and on My Page (Min Side) were also arranged.

In order to raise awareness of the FEVU system, a competition was begun in the autumn of 2017, which led to record-high applications and registration for postgraduate activities.

Norwegian Pharmaceutical Journal (NFT)

NFT celebrated 125 years in March 2018!

The journal publishes a variety of subjects of pharmaceutical interest. Some topics have received broader coverage than others, but the topics all aim to showcase different areas within pharmacy.

NFT is a scientific journal and publishes various articles and doctoral work. We have also published profiles of pharmacists of current interest. In 2018, there have been two themed issues: 'Biological medicines' and 'Veterinary medicines'.

Cartoons

It is important to expand NFT's content, so in spring 2018 we entered into a partnership with a pharmacist employed in a pharmacy who also draws. Her cartoons give a humorous look at an average day in a pharmacy.

Advertising sales

From January 2018 all advertising sales were handed over to our partner A2media, Ltd., which had previously handled only commercial advertising. A2media also publishes all our online advertisements at www.farmatid.no through our new advertising management system (see the section below).

Re-design of websites

In mid-April 2018, we launched a new version of www.farmatid.no. Besides having a more modern look, it is now easier to navigate the web pages. Job listings are placed on the front page now, and we have integrated a new ad management system to give advertisers better space to advertise their products and courses.

Editorial committee and professional editorial group

NFT has both an editorial committee and a professional editorial group. The editorial committee is made up of eight pharmacists from a broad range of pharmaceutical workplaces. The committee contributes tips on news items, reports, interviews and the like.

The professional editorial group, which consists of eight pharmacists chiefly from universities and colleges, contributes to NFT with scientific articles and peer reviews. Three scientific articles were published during the second half of 2017, and eight during the first half of 2018. NFT has been indexed in SweMed+, a database for medical articles from the Nordic countries, since 2010.