

## STATEMENT

of a member of the scientific jury, selected by Order No. **475/1 June 2023** of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, concerning a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

**Author of the statement:** Prof. Lyuben Dimitrov Kirev, PhD, the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8. Economics

**Author of the dissertation:** Lyuba Martinova Miteva /d020218165/ part-time doctoral studies, studies financed by the state, in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8 Economics, the PhD program "Finance, Money, Credit and Insurance (Insurance and Social Security)", to the Department of Insurance and Social Security at Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov

**Dissertation topic:** "Organizational and managerial challenges for medical institutions in the conditions of pandemic of COVID-19 (on the example of Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven)"

### I. General presentation of the dissertation

#### 1. Subject

The subject of the dissertation is "the organizational and management challenges faced by the medical institutions in the country in the conditions of the pandemic COVID-19 and the need to implement a risk management program (on the example of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven)". The stated objective is to prove the need for a strong risk management program and adherence to the steps outlined in it, as well as strict implementation of the identified actions that would modify the threats to the healthcare organization into a positive and generate added value for it. To realize the set objective, nine research tasks are outlined, corresponding to the structure and content of the thesis. The thesis is defended "that the pandemic of COVID-19 provokes the management of hospital medical care facilities in the country, in

the direction of rethinking the strategies of medical institutions and, in particular, the risk management programs underlying risk management". The implementation of these programs is a key management tool and a practice-tested countermeasure for any healthcare organization (in this case, Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven) that is exposed to unprecedented risk pressure of similar pandemic proportions. The formulated aims and objectives have been successfully achieved, resulting in a successful defense of the research thesis.

## **2. Volume**

The dissertation is 240 standard typewritten pages, of which 193 pages are the main text. The study is illustrated graphically and tabularly with 69 figures and 24 tables.

## **3. Structure**

The structure of the dissertation is classical for this kind of research and consists of an introduction; a statement, which comprises three chapters; a conclusion; appendices; list of used literature. It covers the stated aim and objectives and contributes to the development of the problem and justification of the research thesis.

**Introduction.** The introduction contains all the necessary structural elements for an introductory section. The topicality of the topic is stated, the object and subject are defined, and the aim and objectives of the research are defined. The research thesis is precisely formulated, the theoretical and empirical basis of the analysis, and the empirical and logico-theoretical research methods used are ethically stated. The restrictive perimeter of the dissertation research, including the survey conducted, is outlined.

**Chapter one.** The first chapter is theoretical in nature and aims to reveal the theoretical setting of the research. In it, the main focus is on the characteristics of hospital medical institutions in addition to mainly the concept of risk management of the medical institution - definition and characterization of risk

management as a management concept; the evolution of risk management in healthcare enterprises; methods and techniques of risk assessment; the creation, implementation, and monitoring of the risk management plan in the medical institution. In light of the hypothetico-deductive approach, the concluding paragraph highlights the application of risk management in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic.

**Chapter Two.** The second chapter is devoted to the organizational and managerial challenges faced by healthcare facilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It examines the state of hospital medical care in the country, the main challenges facing hospital medical care (HMC) in the country in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic, and the performance of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven in the context of a pandemic.

In the **third chapter** a diagnostic analysis of the organization and management of the activities of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven in the period of the pandemic of COVID-19 is made. It focuses on the key policy guidelines for COVID-19 risk management at Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven; outlines the steps for the implementation of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven’s risk management program and capabilities during the pandemic. The study concludes with the analysis of data from a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the activities of Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven.

**Conclusion.** As a conclusion of the study, it thoroughly presents its main results and conclusions.

## **References**

The doctoral candidate used a total of 78 sources related to the topic of the dissertation, including 32 in Latin (English) and 46 in Cyrillic (Bulgarian), including normative and electronic sources used.



#### **4. Applications**

The dissertation includes one appendix dedicated to the survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the activities of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven.

### **II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation**

#### **1. Assessment of the relevance and elaboration of the scientific problem investigated in the dissertation**

On 13.03.2020, a state of emergency was declared in our country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak of the pandemic had a negative impact on the overall social and economic life of the world and the country. The pandemic led to the loss of thousands of lives at home and millions worldwide. The speed of spread, the unpredictability of its magnitude, and its impact have confronted national health systems with many difficulties and challenges related to patient health and life safety, supply channels for medicines, supplies, protective equipment, staffing and logistical support, financing difficulties, etc. The pandemic has brought to the fore the increasing role and importance of risk management in the management of health systems, including hospital medical care. These circumstances provoked the scientific interest in the organizational and managerial challenges of hospital medical institutions (HMIs) and risk management in the context of a pandemic, to which Lyuba Miteva's dissertation is dedicated. The study meets the requirements for a scientific research thesis with the relevance of the successfully chosen topic, comprehensive and complete study, logical structure, successfully realized goal and objectives of the study, and good information provided.

#### **2. Opinion on the language, volume, and tools of the dissertation**

The style of the development is concise, the language is clear and precise, the scientific apparatus is used accurately and correctly, and the visualization of the analyzed issues by means of figures and tables is at an extremely high level. Good knowledge of the literature and information sources is evident. The

correlation coefficients of Kramer, Chuproff, and Pearson and the chi-square method for the analysis of bivariate distributions of discriminant statistics are used to investigate dependencies.

### **3. Opinion on the extent to which the abstract accurately and completely reflects the work**

The abstract has been developed in accordance with the requirements and reflects the content of the thesis accurately and completely. In addition, the abstract contains a Reference to the scientific and applied contributions in the dissertation, a List of publications of the doctoral candidate, a Reference to compliance with the national requirements under the regulations for the implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Declaration of originality of the dissertation. The outlined guidelines for future research on the topic of the dissertation should also be positively evaluated.

### **III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work**

With the development of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate has reached some indisputable achievements of scientific and applied contributions:

1. By critically reflecting and interpreting the scientific formulations and practice, it has been achieved the complementation and further development of the scientific-theoretical knowledge of the concept of risk management with its specificity in hospital medical institutions. In detail, the characteristics of risk management as a management concept; the evolution of the understanding of risk management in hospital medical institutions; the methods and techniques of risk assessment, implementation, and monitoring of the risk management plan are revealed.

2. It is reasoned that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of reasons (lack of sufficient information, uncontrolled spread, extreme deterioration of the situation, etc.) prevented the implementation of proactive actions by the senior management of national health systems, and the response



was chaotic, with trial-and-error. This has not only led to the revelation of numerous weaknesses and defects in some areas of the health system but also to the activation of the management of the HHs to rethink, update and test their own risk management plans.

3. An in-depth analysis of the state of the BMP sector in the country, the main problems in the hospital sector for university, district, and municipal hospitals are revealed, and the strengths and weaknesses of public and private hospitals as the main types of BMP by ownership form are identified. The main challenges of the BMPs during the COVID-19 pandemic are also highlighted. The performance of Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven during the pandemic is also examined in detail. The key policy directions for COVID-19 risk management are justified - the five steps taken to address the pandemic, the eight steps to implement the Risk and Opportunity Management Programme, and the directions for its future development.

4. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD – Pleven was revealed on the basis of a survey. The analysis of the distribution of the respondents' answers using the correlation coefficients of Kramer, Chuproff, and Pearson and the chi-square method for the analysis of bivariate distributions proves that the “Risk and Opportunity Management Program” is not just a formal bureaucratic document, but a real functioning program that assists in making reliable and reasoned decisions by the hospital management.

5. The undisputed, unquestionable, and outstanding practical-applied significance of the thesis. The risk and opportunity management program of the Multi profile hospital for active treatment „Heart and brain“ EAD–Pleven is not only used by the management of the hospital but can also serve the management of other hospitals in the country, especially in risky situations such as epidemics and pandemics. This also verifies the advocated research thesis that the COVID-19 pandemic is able to challenge the management of the BHIs in terms of risk

management programs as a foundation of risk management. For the purpose of practice, the major problems revealed in the hospital sector, the weaknesses revealed in public and private hospitals, and the recommendations made to mitigate some of the problems in the hospital sector can also serve (pp.95-98).

#### **IV. Critical remarks and questions on the dissertation**

Some critical remarks can be made on the dissertation in the nature of recommendations for future research work of the Ph.

1. Paragraph 1.1 is entitled “Characteristics, place, and importance of Hospitals in modern health systems”. In the section on the place and importance of hospitals in modern health systems, perhaps § 2.1 is more appropriate. The state of hospital medical care in the country.

2. According to BDS - ISO 690-2021, when citing in the main text (Harvard System), the surname and year and, if necessary, the page of the source should be indicated (e.g. Ivanov, N., 2020). In some places in the text it is also allowed to fully spell out the authors' works (p. 22, 114, 115, etc.), and in the case of the literature used it is necessary to format two paragraphs (parts) - the first in the original, the second in Latin.

3. I believe that the subject and object of the dissertation need some refinement. The object is the process or phenomenon chosen for study, and the subject is within the boundaries of the object, i.e., the relation between them as general and particular.

The above remarks do not in the least detract from the merits of our dissertation and are rather in the nature of recommendations for successful future research work.

I have the following question for the PhD student:

According to Eurostat, in 2020, Bulgarian citizens' share of personal healthcare payments is 35.5%. In this negative ranking, we are leaders with an EU-27 average of 14.4%. Can this huge amount of € 1,855.2 million for our

country be explained only by the forms of direct payments that you have listed as a source of funding in healthcare?

#### **V. Summary evaluation of the thesis and conclusion**

The dissertation work is a complete, complete, and thorough research, which is characterized by relevance; independence; methodological soundness; correct use of literature sources, and knowledge of scientific tools, as well as great scientific and applied significance. With its development, the PhD student presents himself as a competent expert in the research problem; demonstrates the ability to conduct scientific research and interpret the results; with the ability to analyze, to generalize, and propose solutions to improve existing practice. The dissertation fully meets the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education and Research. My entirely positive evaluation and the above-mentioned achievements in the nature of scientific and scientific-applied contributions are the grounds for proposing to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award **Lyuba Martinova Miteva** the degree of **Doctor** of Education in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional field 3.8. "Economics" and scientific specialty "Finance, money circulation, credit, and insurance (Insurance and Social Security)".

The signature was deleted on the basis  
of Article 4, Paragraph 1 of Regulation  
679/2016.

Sofia, 19.06.2023

Author of the statement:.....

/Prof. Lyuben Dimitrov Kirev, PhD/