

# Connecting wOrlds

because every person counts



UMC Utrecht strategy 2020–2025



UMC Utrecht



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## Chapter 1

# The process leading to the strategy

**The new strategy was developed over a period of approximately one year. During that time, more than 2200 colleagues, patients and external experts and stakeholders took part in the strategy debate, which yielded interesting insights.**

The society in which we live is experiencing major changes. The population is growing and ageing, leading to changes in the demand for care. Health differences between people are also increasing. Patients want to be seen as individuals with abilities. They expect a personal approach focused on health and quality of life, while maintaining control of their own care.

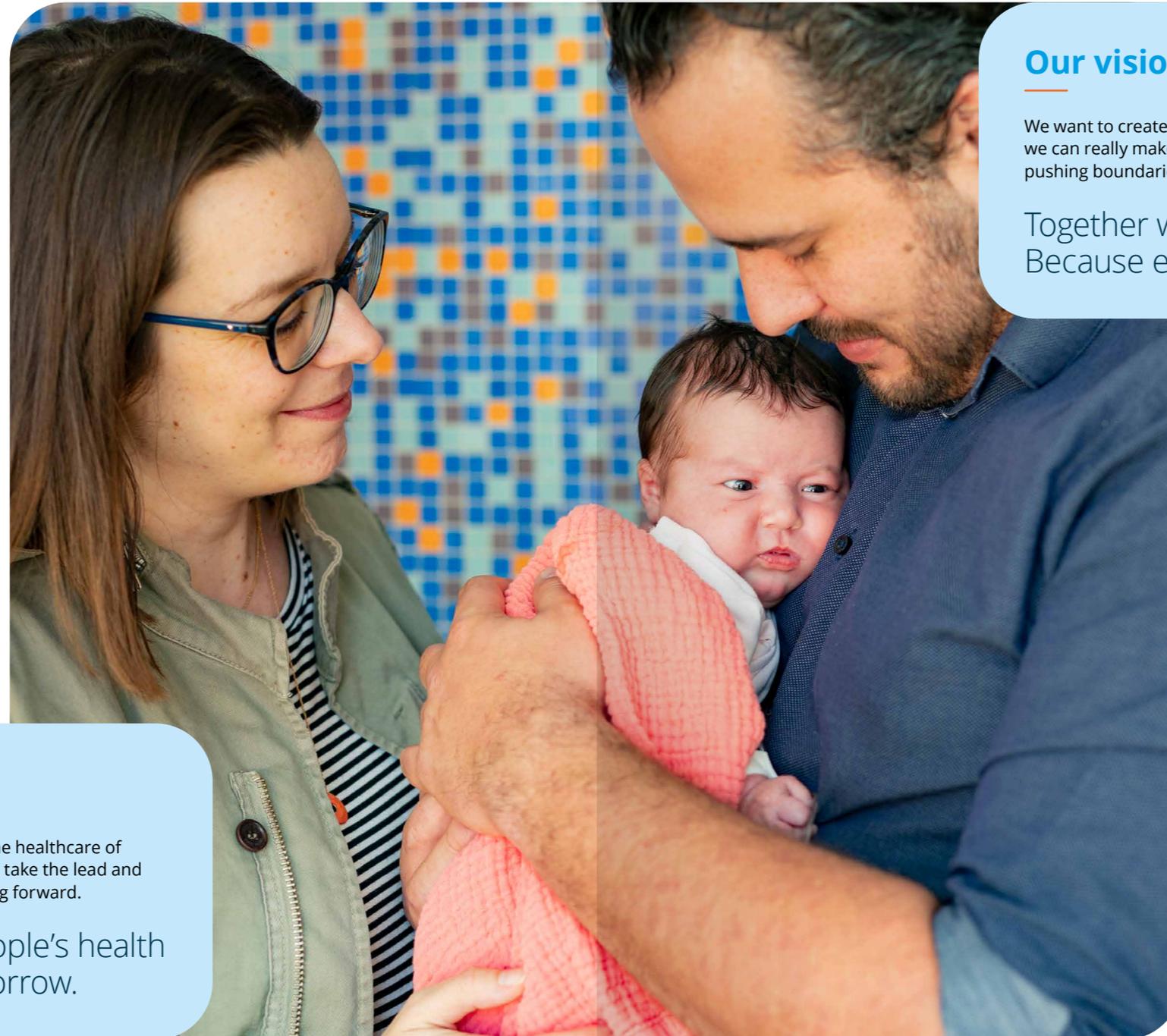
Digitalisation presents opportunities for care at a distance or 'remote care', the formation of care networks, and personalised care. At the same time, society is looking to us to improve care, research and education and to make it more flexible. We are being asked to innovate more and respond more quickly to current social issues. And we are expected to achieve all this within acceptable costs, using sustainable approaches, while the tight labour market is becoming an increasingly significant problem and high-quality healthcare employees are hard to find.

Sometimes these developments feel like a threat. Above all, we see them as a great

opportunity, especially for UMC Utrecht. As a university medical centre, we are working at the forefront of innovation. We combine state-of-the-art research with complex care and leading education – regionally, nationally and internationally. New discoveries and acquired knowledge are immediately applied in practice.

In the final phase of the strategy development process, the COVID-19 crisis erupted in full force. On the one hand, it felt strange to decide on a multi-annual strategy in the midst of that crisis. On the other hand, we observed all around us the emergence of exceptional examples of how we want to work on the challenges in society. We see constant innovation taking place in the context of intensive cooperation within the care network. We see scientists working together in multidisciplinary collaborations in their search for solutions, making use of knowledge partners outside their own fields of expertise. We see how our lecturers, together with students and other university medical centres, are rapidly adapting their teaching methods to facilitate more and different forms of online education.

The crisis confirmed that our direction for the future has already been set in motion.



# What we stand for

## Our mission

Together we strive to improve people's health and create the healthcare of tomorrow. Being at the forefront is not enough. We want to take the lead and ensure that healthcare in the Netherlands continues moving forward.

Together we strive to improve people's health and create the healthcare of tomorrow.

## Our vision

We want to create more value in people's lives in the years to come. We believe we can really make a difference by seeking out unique collaborations and pushing boundaries together.

Together we create more value. Because every person counts.

# What we stand for



## Chapter 3

# Our foundation

**We believe that every person counts. By really listening, we can help every patient improve their health, depending on their needs. The better we get to know the patient and understand the significance of care in their lives, the better we can advise them on their treatment strategy - and that in turn leads to better care for the patient.**

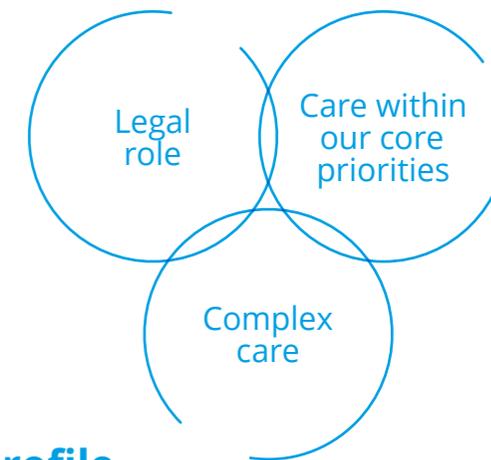
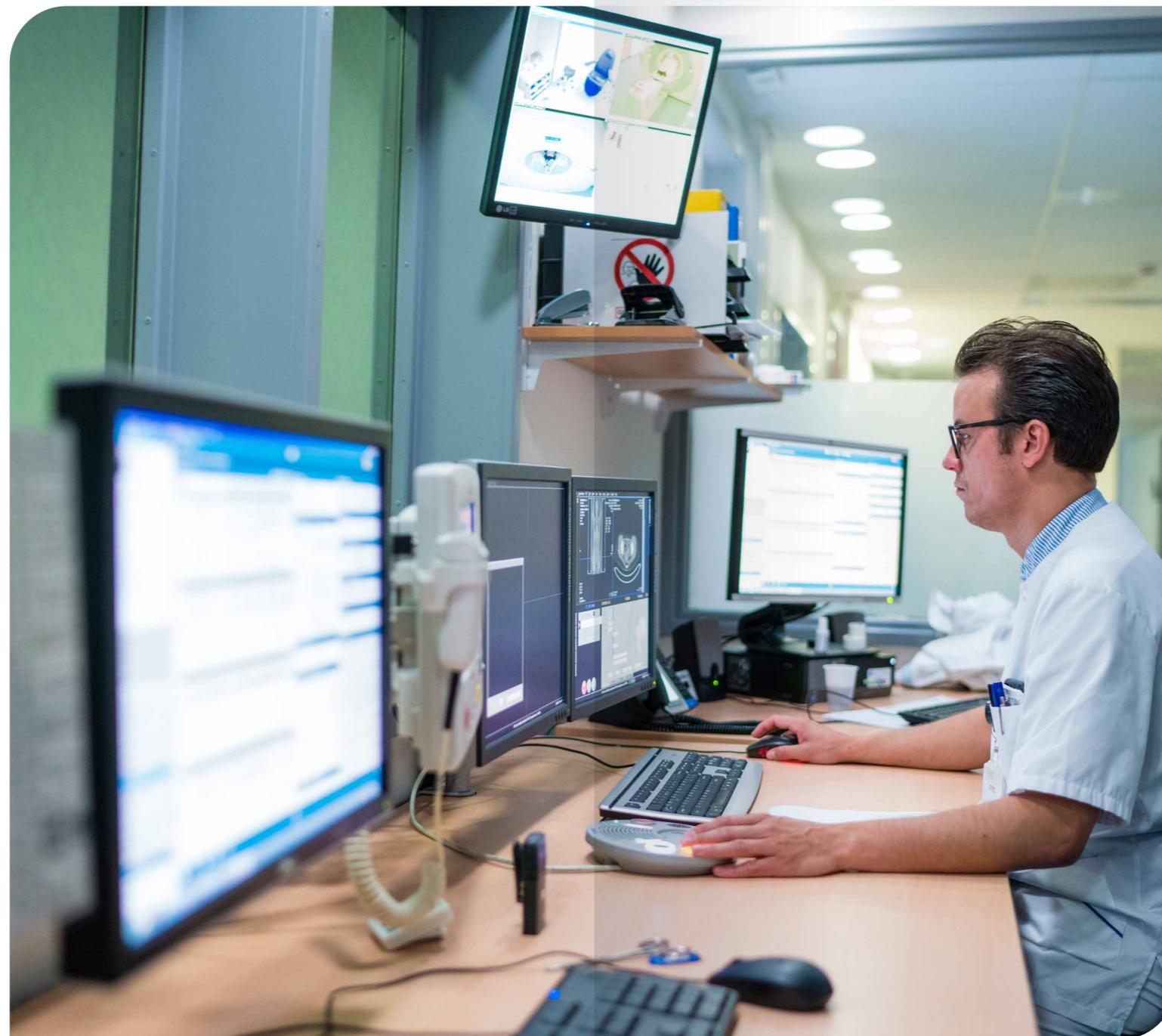
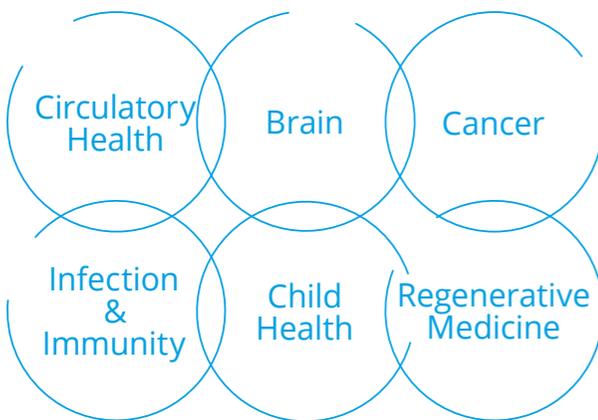
### The patient is at the heart

UMC Utrecht is only one of the parties involved in providing healthcare. Patients often find it complicated to 'navigate' the healthcare system. We feel responsible for the overall care for the patient, and try to organise care together with the patient and our partners. Our aim is to ensure optimal care, preferably as close to home as possible.

## Core priorities

UMC Utrecht will focus on six core priorities in the development of knowledge and innovations. In affirming this focus, we are systematically continuing to build on our previous course.

**Our core priorities are:**



## Care profile

The chosen core priorities are reflected in our care profile. Innovations and acquired knowledge are applied in actual practice, which in turn leads to new forms of education and research questions. This is how we achieve ongoing iterative improvement in our knowledge and expertise.

Our care profile also includes our legal role as providers of specialist medical procedures, such as level 1 trauma care. Complex care that requires the infrastructure and multidisciplinary team of specialists that can be provided by a university medical centre in the region is also a logical part of our care profile. The starting point is that patients receive treatment where it is best for each patient.

UMC Utrecht uses three criteria to determine whether care fits the care profile:

- › Is it within the scope of our core priorities?
- › Does it fit within our legal role (Specialist Medical Procedures Act (WBMV) or expertise centres)?
- › Does the required care involve complex care (multi-specialist ( $\geq 3$ ), multi-diagnostic ( $\geq 4$ ), second opinion or ASA Score 3)?

## Our approach in Utrecht

We bring our mission and vision to life with the unique Utrecht approach. It consists of three parts:

Multidisciplinary  
as the basis for  
innovation

Strengthening  
our networks

Focus on  
what we  
are good at

### Multidisciplinary

Because we believe that ground-breaking innovations can be expected at the intersections of knowledge areas, we are fully committed to *multidisciplinary* in research, care and education. We are also actively seeking knowledge domains outside the healthcare sector to apply that knowledge in the context of care.

### Focus

We intensify our *focus* by making clear choices. In the past, this has led to our core priorities and our care profile. In the years ahead, we will continue to intensify our focus in specific areas where we can make an important contribution to healthcare and the society of the future.

### Strong networks

We are expanding our *networks* to carry out ground-breaking research, to continue innovation in healthcare, and to provide even better education. We innovate together with our partners – regionally, nationally and internationally. Since we embrace a multidisciplinary approach, we are seeking partnerships in new and innovative sectors outside healthcare.

Our networks are diverse. Some deal with continuity of care. General practitioners, our second-line partners (such as Sint Antonius Hospital, Diaconessenhuis and Meander Medical Centre), other care providers (such as Altrecht and the municipal public health service in and around Utrecht) and health insurers are important in this respect. Other networks focus on issues in society. This includes our collaborations within the Utrecht Health Hub, where the municipal and provincial authorities also play a crucial role in addressing these issues.

The Utrecht Science Park is an important network for UMC Utrecht, due to the strong concentration of knowledge and care institutions as well as companies operating in the field of life sciences. Collaboration is intensifying within our national networks, such as the alliance between the eight UMCs. We will also be focusing on collaboration within the alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and Utrecht University.

Internationally, we are intensifying a number of established connections, such as the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Finally, we are collaborating with a growing number of companies. This includes medtech companies such as Philips and Elekta. They will be essential partners for the many innovations that we want to roll out in the healthcare sector over the next few years.

We bring our mission and vision to life with the unique Utrecht approach.



## Chapter 4

# The strategy Connecting wOrlds

Because every  
person counts

The world is buzzing with new challenges and opportunities - for our patients, our partners, our students and our staff. More than ever, we believe in connecting all these worlds. Where different worlds come together, unexpected insights and ground-breaking treatments will emerge. We are connecting worlds to create an environment in which people are seen and heard. Because every person counts.

## The worlds of the people we connect

We bring together the worlds of research, care and education with multidisciplinary education and inter-professional training. We connect regional with national and international. The worlds of hospitals, general practitioners and other care providers. Of research institutes, laboratories and commercial companies. Of patients, employees, families and students. Each and every day, we are looking for new partners so we can innovate faster and more effectively. In that context, we are also looking to parties outside the healthcare sector. By connecting worlds, we create an environment in which every person – every patient, student or colleague – is seen and heard.

## Expanding along clearly defined paths

A university medical centre innovates for the benefit of patients and society. UMC Utrecht connects the professionals surrounding the patient in research, care and education, both within our organisation and beyond:

**1** We provide room for 'fundamental' researchers to explore directions that have never been taken before and connect these researchers with 'applied' researchers. By connecting these two worlds, we ensure that research results lead to ground-breaking new technology that can be applied in clinical practice and in society. Conversely, we also ensure that researchers working on applied science provide inspiration for fundamental researchers when formulating new research questions.

**2** We connect local knowledge to our international network. We apply that knowledge in UMC Utrecht as well as in society (e.g. the Utrecht Health Hub and the Julius Health Centres in Leidsche Rijn), but also in other parts of the world. We then make this knowledge available across the world through publications, conferences and education.

**3** We provide personalised care for individual patients, connecting it to issues in society. When choosing a treatment, we increasingly take the patient's biomedical characteristics and other factors into account. We also look at what meaning patients want to give their lives. At the same time, we are working on issues that affect society, such as prevention, affordability and long-term sustainability.



The patient of today and tomorrow

Patients and professionals in the region

Issues that affect society



Personalised care

Patients and professionals worldwide

The patient in the more distant future

## Choices for the future

By connecting worlds, we can *accelerate* innovations. We are convinced that, together with our network, we can truly make a difference on a number of topics. At the same time, we plan to *strengthen* our organisation to facilitate acceleration.



## Chapter 5

# What we are going to do

### Accelerate by focusing on content

**In the coming years, we will be accelerating in the following areas.**

#### Healthy Living

The 'Healthy Living' theme focuses on the preferences and needs of the individual, with a focus on individualisation of diagnostics, prediction, treatment and prevention of disease, and on promoting individual health. A central feature in our approach is a data facility (U-Cloud), in which we enrich our own data on the patient's life course with data from partners in the region; U-Cloud can also be linked to a multitude of other data sources.

We work in close collaboration with municipalities, the provincial authorities, care providers, health insurers, the Dutch Healthcare Authority (NZA), private parties and of course the general public in the Netherlands.

#### Biofabrication & Disease Modelling

'Biofabrication & Disease Modelling' looks at the underlying mechanisms of various chronic diseases, such as musculoskeletal disorders, cardiovascular and kidney

diseases, and neurological disorders. Incorporating a combination of technology and biology, we design therapeutic and regenerative treatment strategies that promote the body's own recovery.

Important partners include the Hubrecht Institute, the Princess Máxima Centre, Eindhoven University of Technology, and Wageningen University & Research. We also work with the partners from the RegMed research consortium and the MDR Research Centre for Material-Driven Regeneration.

#### Molecular Science & Therapy

A better understanding of diseases at the molecular and cellular level will enable us to develop more targeted therapies. The same approach is currently often used for diseases that may seem similar, but are profoundly different at a molecular level. Through fundamental research and artificial intelligence, we create innovative disease models and advanced measurement methods. We then translate these into insights into risk factors, biomarkers and new interventions.

Our collaborations with companies, the Netherlands Cancer Institute, the RIVM National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, the Hubrecht Institute, European research organisations and other partners are essential in this context.

### Image-Guided Interventions

Minimally invasive therapies are inextricably linked to image control (operating without open incisions). Surgical procedures guided by optical imaging, X-rays and especially MRIs will play an increasingly prominent role in interventions in Cancer, Circulatory Health, Brain and RM. For example, thanks to the introduction of the MR-Linac, a UMC Utrecht innovation, tumours can be irradiated with much greater precision, and with less collateral damage to healthy tissue.

Our aim is that image-based interventions will become the standard for more effective treatment of various diseases in 2025. We are making this happen in conjunction with companies such as Philips, Elekta and Sectra and other national and international partners (Princess Máxima Centre, MD Anderson, St Jude, Eindhoven University of Technology, Life Sciences faculties of the University etc.).

### Complex Integrated Care for Children

Together with the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital and in collaboration with the Princess Máxima Centre, UMC Utrecht is committed to complex integrated care for children. This makes it possible to unravel and treat complex conditions such as perinatal damage, congenital diseases, and the consequences of oncological treatments. Our approach also improves prevention. This ambition requires close collaboration between fundamental and applied researchers, but also with the children's social environment: school, family, the sports club.

### Acute Complex Care

As a trauma centre, as well as through the Major Incidents Hospital that we manage together with the Central Military Hospital, UMC Utrecht has a unique position in care for sick and injured people on a large scale. In order to be able to accelerate in this area, we strive to achieve state-of-the-art emergency care, operating facilities and intensive care.

### The New Utrecht School

We want to optimally prepare professionals and students for the future of healthcare. For that reason, we are accelerating in the area of multidisciplinary and interprofessional education, in an inclusive and diverse learning environment. The New Utrecht School allows students and professionals in training to excel in a combination of knowledge and skills. They are trained to take responsibility, focus on the patient perspective, be critical, and think creatively.

The New Utrecht School is a joint initiative with Utrecht University, HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Eindhoven University of Technology and Wageningen University & Research. By adopting innovations in the SUMMA programme, the wide-ranging bachelor's in Clinical Sciences, the master's in Medical Humanities, an international master's in Translational Medicine, and The New Utrecht School for Advanced Study, we give students the best possible foundation to solve tomorrow's social and scientific problems.



Our collaborations with companies, institutes and research partners are essential.

# What that will require

## Strengthening the organisation

In recent years, we have laid a solid foundation with strategic alliances and innovative projects on healthcare & ICT. We have also invested in programmes such as Together for the Patient, Connecting Leaders, Effective Management, Patient Participation and Modernising Business Operations. We will continue strengthening our efforts in the following key areas.



### Patient participation

In order to be able to advise patients about an appropriate treatment strategy, we will need to have an even better understanding of what care means for a patient. We want to continuously learn from our patients in order to see what is needed and to be able to make choices together. Moreover, we involve patients in our innovations in care, research and education.

### Attractive employer

We want to be an organisation where colleagues feel heard and appreciated, because everyone's opinion counts, and thanks to inspirational leadership that employees are proud to talk about. We believe that everyone has talent, so we facilitate and encourage personal development with ample training opportunities. And we have a strong focus on talent management and career paths, to ensure that our colleagues have prospects for ongoing professional development.

### Very strong networks

Our ambition is to be an encouraging partner that connects different worlds and creates rock-solid collaborations. For various challenges, we are looking for the right parties to find new solutions together. To ensure that the right care is provided in the right place, we are intensifying collaborations with local and regional partners in the healthcare sector and beyond in the central provinces of the Netherlands. Together with these partners, we are setting up transmurals care chains. We are using our academic expertise and innovative power to support the region. We are also using national and international networks to increase the impact of our innovations.

## Our working method *Together for the Patient* remains important

### Data science and e-health

Data, artificial intelligence and digital technology drive innovation in science. They make it possible to offer personalised care, both from a medical perspective and in terms of location. Care that can be provided at home will also be offered at home. To this end, we are developing e-health applications and making them widely applicable.

### Sustainable, affordable care

UMC Utrecht is financially healthy. In every part of our organisation, we aim to maintain socially acceptable costs in order to keep healthcare accessible. We standardise processes and clarify responsibilities and powers. As a result, employees know how they can contribute to the high quality and affordability of our services.

To contribute to the health of patients, employees and students, we are reducing our negative impact on climate and the environment. A more sustainable UMC Utrecht has lower CO2 emissions and uses fewer raw materials.

### Agile organisation

An agile organisation is key in order to anticipate issues in society and to be able to apply innovations quickly. Our working method 'Together for the Patient' remains important in this context. We will continue to build on our programmes from the previous strategy (Connecting U). We will follow the principles of integrated risk management to innovate quickly and safely.

### Excellent premises

In collaboration with the partners at Utrecht Science Park, the province and the municipality, we are building a UMC Utrecht that can accommodate our ambitions and the healthcare of tomorrow. Our new Health Campus focuses on a healthy lifestyle where the body has the chance to recover naturally. This radical overhaul will take approximately ten years.



# In conclusion

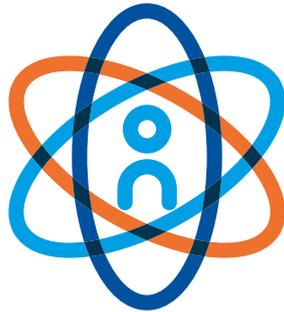
There is a lot going on in the worlds of the patients, our staff and students, but also in the worlds of our partners. That is precisely why we believe in *Connecting Worlds, because every person counts.*

We believe in connecting the worlds of research, care and education. The worlds of hospitals, general practitioners and other care providers. Of research institutes, laboratories and

commercial companies. Of patients, employees, families and students.

By connecting worlds, we create an environment in which every person – every patient, student or colleague – is seen and heard. We invite everyone to connect with our world. Together we create more value. Because every person counts.





**UMC Utrecht**