

The logo for the European Federation of Hospital Clown Organizations (EFHCO) features the lowercase letters 'efhco' in a blue, rounded, sans-serif font. A small red dot is positioned at the end of the 'o'.

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF
HOSPITAL CLOWN ORGANIZATIONS

EFHCO approved
professional
hospital clown organization

A large, light gray watermark of the EFHCO logo is centered on the page, behind the 'QUALITY LABEL' text.

QUALITY LABEL

The European Federation of Hospital Clowns Organizations (EFHCO) and the criteria for becoming one of its member organizations were established 8th of March 2011.

The artistic criteria for admission were established the 6th of January 2012.

The quality label is established in September 2015.

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Chapter I - EFHCO Quality label

1.1 Introduction

EFHCO is the umbrella organization of professional European Hospital Clown Organizations. All EFHCO members work together in their aim to raise the standards of professional hospital clowning across Europe by exchanging knowledge, following workshops, sharing research as well as using it as a networking platform. Thirteen members have joined in the effort to advance the professional hospital clowning sector.

EFHCO organizations believe that children, vulnerable people and their families are entitled to the highest quality of professional Hospital Clowning to positively impact on difficult health care environments. EFHCO members must therefore abide to artistic, financial and organizational guidelines and procedures outlined in the EFHCO statutes and charter, as well as respect and follow the protocol of the individual medical institutions. Only when fulfilling all requested criteria, organizations are permitted to be an EFHCO member.

1.2 Aim EFHCO Quality label

Hospital Clown Organizations exist all over the world. Some organizations are small; others are bigger and operate across borders. Currently, there doesn't exist a quality standard that Hospital Clowns Organization should meet. Anyone is able to start a Hospital Clowns Organization, with professional clowns but also with non-professional clowns.

The aim of the EFHCO Quality Label is to be a professionally recognized mark of quality standards, outlined in the statutes of the organization and achieved by a regular and rigorous monitoring process, to ensure best practice with all its members to achieve the highest standard of professional Hospital Clowning. The label is given to organizations that can provide the best service to the children and other vulnerable people in care institutions.

In this way EFHCO Hospital Clown Organizations can be recognized by care institutions as professional organizations, that provide trustworthy and transparent services to their patients.

1.3 Good Governance

EFHCO asks its members to maintain a Good Governance policy. This implies that the foundation, and all its members, will use its best endeavours to become and maintain a healthy organization that is transparent in management, finances, yearly results and future goals. The members acknowledge that working with children means to take extra care and therefore they are conscious of the specific objectives and will take this into account permanently.

- The member organization reflects on its way of work and on the results. Drawing lessons from the reflection and translation into improved methods and effectiveness and an improvement of its cost efficiency.

- The member organization is open to debate on quality and wants to work towards an improvement of its own quality.
- The member organization listens to its target groups (customers) and tries to give them as much service and information as possible.
- The member organization strives for a transparent and clear organizational structure with divided responsibilities.

Chapter II Criteria Quality Label

2.1 Hospital Clown Organizations

a. Aim

The main goal of the organizations is providing hospital clowning services in a health care environment; in particular caring for hospitalized children and their families and other vulnerable and sick people.

b. Administration

1. The EFHCO quality label can be obtained by organizations, not by individuals.
2. Organizations must have a legal status of a not-for-profit organization with legal personality (or status)
3. Organizations must have been providing hospital clown services for a minimum of 3 years
4. The organization must possess and ensure compliance with their own code of ethics
5. Organizations must be in possession of the correct insurance, Health and Safety and Child Protection policies
6. Organizations must submit yearly accounts to professional external auditors and provide for annual financial statements, annual financial and activities report
7. Clowns are formally contracted by the organization and sign a code of ethics, rules of conduct or rules of engagement.
8. Organizations must refuse funds of which the origin proves to be opposed to the basic rights of children and human ethics.
9. Organizations must have a formal complaint procedure how to receive and handle grievances.

b. Cooperation health care institution

1. Organizations must work in collaboration with hospital administrations and provide a schedule for visits as well as feedback on their work.
2. Clowns are compliant with all health and safety regulations in the hospital where they exercise their profession.
3. Clowns respect codes of conduct and hospital ethics, including confidentiality and discretion.

c. Artistic conditions

1. Organizations must use artistic methods and techniques, must have a clear artistic policy, and must employ an artistic director or equivalent.
2. Clowns are professionals who are subject to ongoing (artistic, social, medical and psychological) training supported by an artistic director.
3. Artistic directors are selected on the basis of their leadership skills and experience in the performing arts, their professionalism and maturity, and their suitability for work with vulnerable people.

2.2 Providing services to care institutions

a. Purpose of visits and professional conduct:

1. The purpose of the clowns' visit is to improve the quality of life and well being of children and their families including other vulnerable and sick people within a health care environment.
2. The clown will not accept any gratuities for its' work or enter into any commercial or promotional activity within the health care unit other than that sanctioned by the Member Organization.
3. The clown will not enter into a personal relationship with any participant or family member outside of the artist's professional activities.

b. Relationship with health care Staff:

1. Clowns must at all times respect the work of health care staff.
2. Clowns must not perform any task within the healthcare environment while engaged as hospital clowns other than the artistic activities that they have been hired to perform by the organization.
3. Clowns will not enter into any discussions or take sides in controversies within the hospital, complaints about service or problems between hospital personnel.

c. Equal Opportunities:

1. Clowns must retain their professional integrity, regardless of illness, age, gender, ethnic heritage, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, social status, political belief, education, tradition or family affairs of participants.

d. Confidentiality and Discretion:

1. Clowns must respect the privacy of patients and their families and maintain professional discretion and confidentiality (without prejudice to appropriate communication with health care staff). Confidential information includes anything that has been explicitly communicated, as well as things seen, read, heard, or understood concerning the patients' state of health.
2. The clown will also not disclose the identity of participants or any information contained in their medical records unless written permission is given.
3. Discretion is mandatory in all locations: inside and outside the hospital and other health care institutions (elevators, dressing or locker rooms, and public places).

e. Child Protection:

1. Clowns must comply with the child protection policies of both the Member Organization and the relevant health care unit.

f. Health and Safety:

1. All artists must abide by the hygiene and infection control procedures of the health care unit.
2. The safety of participants is paramount and artists must not engage in an activity that may put a participant or family member into any physical or psychological danger or harm.

2.3 Working with Artists:

- a. All clowns must be professional performing artists who are trained to work in health care as clowns.
- b. Clowns are selected on the basis of their skills and experience in the performing arts, their professionalism and maturity, and their suitability for work with vulnerable people.
- c. Clowns must receive comprehensive training from the Member Organization before working in a health care environment.
- d. Member Organizations must provide ongoing training to clowns to ensure the highest possible standard.

- e. Member organizations have a formal procedure for coaching sessions done within hospitals or other care institutions by their artistic director and his/her specially trained coach(es).
- f. All organizations must monitor the quality of their work via feedback and evaluation sessions with the care institutions.

EFHCO

Chapter III Review for issuing the EFHCO quality label

EFHCO members can issue the EFHCO quality label after one-year membership.

For the reviewing of the annual finances and the accountability towards donors, EFHCO members cooperate with a local professional external auditor. Each year members provide the external audit review by the auditor to the EFHCO board.

Independent reviewers carry out the audit of the quality of the hospital clown organizations carrying the EFHCO label. The reviewers for the artistic program have an artistic background, but are not necessarily clowns. They are carefully briefed upon the questions to ask to artistic directors, clowns and their care institutions. These questions have been drafted especially for this quality label.

The board verifies that there is no conflict of interest between the reviewer and the member organization.

3.1 Initial Research

- a. Organizations who apply for the assignment of the EFHCO quality label are audited on two functions:
 1. Management and office
 2. Artistic Program
- b. When the initial research has been finished positively, the board decides on issuing the quality label for a period of 5 years.

3.2 Monitoring

- a. Yearly every EFHCO member is obliged to send the approved management and office documents to the EFHCO board.
- b. The EFHCO board monitors the documents.
- c. Independent reviewers are responsible for monitoring the artistic procedures of the member organizations.
- d. The frequency of monitoring the Artistic Program will be once every five years.
- c. The reviewer that monitors a group informs the EFHCO board on his findings.
- d. Procedure:
 - a. If one or both parts are not met, the EFHCO board is informed.
 - b. The EFHCO member is cautioned by the board and gets two months time to organize the management and office part. For the artistic part the member organization will have to improve its artistic procedure within 6 months.
 - c. If after two months the member organization can present the requested document, or meets after 6 months the artistic requirements, the member organization preserves the quality label.
 - d. If after respectively two or 6 months the Management and Office or the Artistic procedure is still not approved, the organization will lose its quality label and is no longer an EFHCO member.

3.3 Extending the EFHCO quality label

After approval of the Management and Office and the Artistic Program of a member, the renewal of the quality label is issued at least 3 months before the contract ceases, again for a period of five years.

Chapter IV Communication

The message

The aim of the EFHCO Quality Label is to be a professionally recognized mark of quality standards, outlined in the statutes of the organization and achieved by a regular and rigorous monitoring process, to ensure best practice with all its members to achieve the highest standard of professional Hospital Clowning.

The label is given to organizations that can provide the best service to the children and other vulnerable people in care institutions. EFHCO member organizations give trustworthy services to health care organizations.

The effect of the quality label toward health care institutions on the long term should be that the staff and hospital direction chooses to work with hospital clown organizations with an EFHCO quality label.

EFHCO monitors the criteria on five year basis to uphold the quality.

Main purpose

- Healthcare institutions will gain knowledge on the benefits of the profession of hospital clowns and hospital clown organizations, the importance of professional and trained artists.
- Awareness and appreciation of care institutions about working with professional hospital clown organizations.
Eventually healthcare institutions decide only to work with EFHCO organizations because we guaranty the wellbeing of their patients.
- More professional hospital clown organizations will apply to become an EFHCO member, which will raise the overall quality of the profession in Europe to a higher level.

Context and assumptions

The historical clown has been around since the time of ancient Greece, before 2400 B.C. The clown throughout the ages is a disturber of the social order, a nonconformist that plays with social rules

and boundaries. Many cultures have their own historic clown character, ranging from medieval jesters and fools to circus clowns.

Hospital clowning is a profession since being pioneered by Michael Christensen in 1986 when he started the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit in New York City. Since then, clown programs have found their way into most parts of the world, including Europe, the Americas and Asia.

Most hospital clowns have backgrounds in performing arts. So far the profession of hospital clowning, however, is not generally recognized as a profession. This can lead to misunderstanding.

The target audience

- Professional hospital clown organizations
- Healthcare institutions in those countries where members are present
- Umbrella healthcare organizations
- Members
- Target groups / donors of the member organizations

Goals and communication

- Professional hospital clown organizations
At the end of 2015 the professional hospital organizations within Europe know about EFHCO and the quality label.
- Healthcare institutions
At the end of 2015 all healthcare institutions connected to the members have been informed about the existence and value of the Quality label
 - Letter to the directors / emails to the direct contacts in the hospital
 - Medical journals (in combination with the publication of new relevant research)
- Umbrella healthcare organizations
At the end of 2015 the umbrella organizations have been visited and informed about the quality label. They have shared the news to their network.
 - Visit by one of our members
- Members
Members have added the quality label into their corporate communication and informed their health care institutions network
 - emailing and newsletters
 - Information on the website and annual report of the members