

## STATEMENT

**From Associate Professor Milena Gancheva Sandeva, PhD**

**Department of Midwifery Care, Faculty of Public Health, MU-Plovdiv**

for dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree 'PhD'

professional field: 7.4. Public Health

doctoral Programme: 'Health Care Management'

**Author:** Zhivka Georgieva Marosyan

**Form of PhD studies:** full-time

**Department** of Health Care; Branch Sliven; MU-Varna "Prof. "Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Varna.

**Topic:** "EXPLORING THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF HEALTH CARE SPECIALISTS TO WORK IN A NURSERY"

**Scientific supervisor:** Assist. Prof. Anna Georgieva, PhD

By Order No. P-109-196/ 16.03.2023 of the Rector of Medical University - Varna I have been elected as a member of the Scientific Jury, and on the basis of Protocol No. 1/ 27.03.2023 I have been appointed to prepare an opinion on the procedure for obtaining the PhD degree with candidate Zhivka Georgieva Margosyan, PhD student in full-time form of study at the Department of Health Care, Branch Sliven at Medical University - Varna.

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student**

The submitted set of paper/electronic materials is in accordance with Article 70 (1) of Section IV. Conditions and procedure for acquiring the Doctoral Degree at MU-Varna from the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at MU-Varna.

A review of the documents shows that the procedure for the deferral and the procedure for the declaration of defence were followed. The documents have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at MU-Varna.

### **2. Brief biographical data about the PhD student**

Assist. Zhivka Georgieva Margosyan, acquired Secondary Special Education with a specialty in nursing - children's profile at IPHSSSE "Dr. Petar Beron" Sliven. She obtained her post-secondary education in 1996 at the Medical Institute - Sliven, with a professional qualification - pediatric nurse. A few years later, in 2001, she graduated in Social Activities, Bachelor's Degree at the "St. Cyril and Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo. The PhD

student has constantly improved her professional competence, as evidence of this acquired three Master's degrees, respectively in 2004 - **Master's degree** in "Finance", VTU "Sv. Cyril and Methodius" - Veliko Tarnovo with a professional qualification – **Master's degree** in Economics and Master of Business Administration - Health Management with a professional qualification - Business Administration; and in 2015 she obtained a Master's degree in Health Care Management - MU-Varna, "Prof. "Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" with a professional qualification - health care manager and teacher in practice. In 2022, she also acquired a specialty in Clinical Social Work.

The professional activity of Zhivka Georgieva Margosyan, began in 1982 as a nurse in the Infectious Diseases Department of the Hospital "Dr. I. Seliminski" - Sliven. Since 2015, after winning a competition, the PhD student was appointed as an assistant professor at MU-Varna, Branch - Sliven in the Department of Health Care.

### **3. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the objectives and tasks**

The increased modern demands on the training of health professionals stem mainly from the ever-growing need for quality health care. The pedagogical activity of the nurse/midwife in the nursery is specific to her core professional competence. The health care professional should possess a complex set of knowledge, skills and experience in the field of pedagogy, psychology, physiology, ethics, etc., which should form in him/her the ability to make correct decisions in different situations, as well as to ensure the legal capacity to carry out specialized activities in different conditions of realization. A major challenge facing health care professionals in our country is the absence of a unified and systematic approach to the pedagogical training of health care professionals who are eligible to work in a nursery.

The theme of the dissertation is topical and represents a socially significant problem and has a marked contemporary relevance and scientific significance.

The main objective of the dissertation research is - To investigate and establish the state of professional training (with emphasis on pedagogical) of health care professionals to work in a nursery and specify the opportunities for optimizing their pedagogical activity.

The aim is clearly and precisely formulated, with eight main tasks and three working hypotheses. The objectives and hypotheses meet and are fully consistent with the stated goal.

### **4. Knowledge of the problem**

The presented extensive literature review (70 articles) and the rich bibliography to the dissertation work of assist. Zhivka Margosyan, give a clear picture of the in-depth knowledge of the problems of professional training of health care professionals for work in kindergartens. The literature review is based on **247** literature sources, of which **125** in Cyrillic and **122** in Latin. The review is developed in 3 sections and discusses a significant part of the emergence and development of nurseries as a learning environment in early childhood, the current state of the problem - the normative framework and the organization of the activities of nurseries, at home and abroad, the nature of the pedagogical activity, specific characteristics of the professional carrying out the pedagogical activity, tasks and responsibilities, functions and roles of health care professionals, their professional and pedagogical training. The problem is thoroughly discussed and has good cognitive value. In

the literature review, assist. Zhivka Margosyan, has outlined the main problems, opportunities and perspectives for the development and creation of a new systemic interdisciplinary approach to early childhood development **in order to provide optimal conditions for raising the youngest**. These results demonstrate the absence of a unified and systematic approach in the pedagogical training of health care professionals entitled to work in a nursery. On the other hand, health professionals face problems in their communication with parents due to asymmetric relationships, language barriers, insufficient health literacy and insufficient motivation for cooperation on the part of parents. It is concluded that **the pedagogical competence of the nurse/midwife, in relation to her pedagogical activity in the nursery, is an integral part of her professional competence**. Unfortunately, this component of professional competence is not sufficiently covered in the training of future personnel.

## 5. Methodology of the study

The methodology used in the study meets the requirements of modern science and allows the solution of the set goal and objectives. A complex empirical sociological study was conducted using a survey method, documentary method, analysis of literature sources and expert evaluation. The object of the study is the professional training of health care professionals for work in a nursery, with an emphasis on the pedagogical. The subject of the scientific research is the process of studying and establishing the state of professional training of health care professionals for work in a nursery, with an emphasis on pedagogical. 577 people were included, divided into five target groups:

- **Students - 192**, of whom 97 with specialty "Nurse" and 95 with specialty "Midwife", studying in the Departments of Health Care at the Branch of Sliven, Branch of Veliko Tarnovo, Branch of Shumen and Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Professor Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Varna.
- **Health care professionals - 164**, working in nurseries in the cities of Sliven, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen, of whom 134 with the specialty "Nurse" and 30 with the specialty "Midwife".
- **Educators - 15** working in a nursery school in the towns of Sliven, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen
- **Parents - 175**, whose children attend kindergartens in the cities of Sliven, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen during the study period.
- **Experts - 31**, directors of kindergartens and habilitated teachers.

The methodology of the dissertation precisely defines the object, units and signs of observation. To obtain data for empirical analysis, the sociological method was used - direct individual anonymous survey. Specifically designed questionnaires were used for each of the study groups. The questionnaires are a system of questionnc adapted for the population in Bulgaria, as well as questionnc developed for the specific study. Through a semi-structured interview questionnaire, experts' attitudes and perceptions were explored.

The chosen research methodology allows achieving the set goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the problems solved in the dissertation.

## 6. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis

The scientific work of аснсгг. Zhivka Margosyan is laid out as required in **159** pages and is structured in four main chapters. Contains - introduction, literature review, aim,

objectives, materials and methods, results and discussion, practical approaches to maintain and improve the pedagogical training of health care professionals working in nursery, conclusions, recommendations and contributions. It is illustrated with **42** figures, **7** tables, **2** diagrams and **7** appendices. The bibliographic reference includes **247** references, of which **125** in Cyrillic and **122** in Latin.

The first chapter provides an introduction and an extensive conceptual literature review (comprising 70 pages), covering 3 sections that address the issue extensively and in depth. and examines a significant part of the emergence and development of nurseries as a learning environment in early childhood, the current state of the problem - the normative framework and the organization of the activities of nurseries, at home and abroad, the nature of the pedagogical activity, specific characteristics of the professional carrying out the pedagogical activity, tasks and responsibilities, functions and roles of health care professionals, their professional and pedagogical training.

In chapter two, the dissertation details the design of the empirical study. Details are presented - the setting of the study; aim, objectives and hypotheses; study contingent; units and signs of observation, research tools; methods and methodological tools, as well as mathematical and statistical processing of data.

Chapter three presents a thorough analysis of the results obtained. The dissertation is well structured, and it makes an impression that at each stage, after the presentation and analysis of the results obtained, a thorough discussion and conclusion is made.

Chapter four presents practical approaches to maintain and improve the pedagogical training of health care professionals working in a nursery by presenting a system, criteria and a scorecard for evaluating the pedagogical performance of health care professionals working in a nursery, as well as a system for optimizing the pedagogical performance of health care professionals, working in the nursery, Continuing/postgraduate training plan for health care professionals and expert assessment.

Eleven general conclusions are drawn, which follow directly from the own results and are in direct relation to the structure of the dissertation research.

## **7. Contributions and Significance of the Development for Science and Practice**

The dissertation has scientific and theoretical contributions and contributions of practical and applied nature. Of particular importance is the developed author's model of a system for control and evaluation of pedagogical activity, author's model of a system for optimization of pedagogical activity and a unified model of a system for postgraduate training of medical specialists working in the nursery

The results of the study can be used for changes in the current legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the professional (pedagogical) training of health care professionals to work in a nursery.

Based on the results of the dissertation research, assist. Zhivka Margosyan , makes topical and reasoned recommendations to various institutions:

- **To the Council of Ministers:**

To further develop and refine the current legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the professional (pedagogical) training of health care professionals to work in a nursery.

- **To the Bulgarian Association of Health Care Professionals:**

Introduction of a unified model of a postgraduate training system for medical professionals working in the nursery.

- **To the Heads of Municipal Health Departments and Directors of Nurseries:**

Putting into practice:

- System for control and evaluation of the pedagogical activity of medical specialists working in the nursery;
- Tools for monitoring and evaluation of the pedagogical activity of medical professionals working in the nursery;
- System for optimizing the pedagogical activity of medical professionals working in the nursery.
- Stimulating the postgraduate training of medical professionals working in the nursery.

## **8. Assessment of the publications on the thesis**

In connection with the dissertation work assist. Zhivka Margosyan presents 3 scientific publications, 2 of which she is the first author.

The dissertator has participated in national and international scientific forums with papers reflecting the results of the research.

## **9. Personal participation of the PhD student**

In the proposed dissertation, the dissertator has a complete personal involvement and all the given conclusions, contributions and obtained results are his personal merit.

## **10. Abstract**

The thesis abstract is developed according to the requirements and reflects the results made in the thesis.

## **11. Critical comments and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks on the structure of the dissertation and the materials provided. I recommend assist. Zhivka Margosyan to continue her future research on this topical issue.

## **CONCLUSION**

The presented dissertation has scientific, scientifically- applied and applied results, which make an original contribution to science and practice, and meet all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADAB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADAB and the Regulations of MU-Varna.

The dissertation shows that assist. Zhivka Margosyan possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Health Care Management", demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Because of the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research, presented by the above reviewed dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, *and propose the honorable scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science* to assist. Zhivka Margosyan in the doctoral program "Health Care Management", field of higher education 7. Health and Sport, professional field 7.4. Public Health.

15.04.2023

Reviewer:  .....

**Assoc. Prof. Milena Sandeva, PhD**