



18.34x26.24	1	עמוד 6	The Jerusalem Post - golden age	24/11/2017	61155561-0
מכון מאירט גויינט ברוקדיי - 40045					

Maccabi strives for excellence

By John Benzaquen

Gidi Leshetz began his career with the Maccabi health fund 18 years ago as a physiotherapist. With time, he became the manager of the Maccabi Physiotherapy Institute, and for the past three years he has been head of the Maccabi Jerusalem district. This district includes nearly a quarter of the territory of the country. With clinics extending from Holon and Rishon Lezion to Modi'in, Jerusalem, Gush Etzion and Beit Shemesh. In this district Maccabi has 550,000 members, 3,500 employees and a multibillion-shekel budget.

Leshetz says, "The fact that I started working with Maccabi as an ordinary employee and today head the organization's largest district proves that Maccabi ensures that its staff can develop and grow with the organization.



Gidi Leshetz (Photo by Shay Adam)

conduct surveys to see what our members need. This varies from city to city to city and neighborhood to neighborhood. We also endeavor to make our services as friendly and as accessible as possible. When a person needs the services of a health fund, it means he/she is not well, and we try to give him/her the best possible service.

And we are successful in this. For the past eight years, Maccabi has been leading the Brookdale Institute's satisfaction surveys as the most highly regarded health fund.

There is a perception that hospitals are at the forefront of medical advances. Maccabi has only a few hospitals. Where does that put Maccabi?

Hospitals were very important in the past. They are still important, but there have been big changes in the way patients are treated. Today, 90% of patients are treated in the community. That means in outpatient clinics; only 10% are treated in hospitals. Hospitals are important because they treat complex medical situations such as surgery, but the trend is heading more toward daycare centers that provide the necessary medical services. Today, patients prefer to receive as much medical treatment as possible close to home and minimize the need for hospitalization.

How is the Digital Age reflected in medicine?

Technological developments have a very important bearing on medicine. Many new medical devices are being developed to detect various illnesses. In addition, with the help of modern technologies, we are able to monitor the condition of the patient. The modern patient is technologically oriented and aspires to do as many things as possible from afar and in a quick and efficient manner. Maccabi was the first health fund to make use of technology. Today, we have a website and computer applications that enable patients to view the results of their tests, send queries to doctors, make appointments and more.

There are four health funds in Israel. Is that good for the consumer?

Yes, I believe so. Competition has proven to be a boon in every field, especially in the public sector. Competition is what encourages the health funds to improve their services.

How does Maccabi deal with the needs of unique sectors of the population?

We are a health organization that provides services for diverse populations. Therefore, it is our duty to provide personalized treatment and services to special populations. For example, we have clinics across the country for French speakers. The computerized service stations in the clinics provide information in five languages. We recently opened an English-speaking medical center with an English-speaking medical staff in Jerusalem's Ramat Eshkol neighborhood. We place an emphasis on people with disabilities. We make our medical centers accessible so that people with disabilities will have no difficulty reaching them.

How will Maccabi look in 10 years?

We will continue to be at the forefront of technological developments. And we will continue to give our members the best medical treatment and services possible.

What was one of the highlights at Maccabi this year?

One of the most important developments was the high demand for our services. At the beginning of the year, the National Insurance Institute published figures on the number of people joining the different health funds. The report revealed that Maccabi attracted more new members than any other health fund. Furthermore, it showed that Jerusalem, where we have been heading health reforms in recent years, was the city where the highest number of residents joined Maccabi. For me this is important because it validates what we have been doing for the past years.

What is important to locals in regard to health?

The local consumer looks for medical excellence and professionalism, and service. When we make plans to develop or expand our services, we