

Regional European Organisation of the FDI

National Report 2022 Germany

**German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer e.V.)
Berlin / Brussels**

Changes in the association and its organization

No changes in the association or its organization occurred in 2022.

Trends and developments

- **Professional Politics:** There was one change in the area of professional law in 2022.
- There was one development relevant to the dental profession in ***national health policy*** in 2022. German dentists are allowed to administer vaccinations against the Coronavirus until early April 2023. The BZÄK fought for this right since September 2021.
- In ***education policy*** there were was one relevant development for the dental team. After twenty years, the vocational education and training regulation for dental chairside assistants (*Zahnmedizinische Fachangestellte, ZFA*) was modernized and the new training regulation (*Ausbildungsverordnung*) is in force since August 2022.
- In 2022, there was one change in the ***health insurance system*** relevant to the dental profession. The new regulation for the systematic treatment of periodontitis and other periodontal diseases (in force since July 2021) is currently financially limited by the Statutory Health Insurance. This is an attempt to limit the high expenditure in the German healthcare system. This leads to reduced revenues for dentists. The financial limit of the systematic treatment of periodontitis and other periodontal diseases could not be avoided completely, but the BZÄK managed to keep this treatment (the health ministry wanted to initially erase it completely) in the program of the Statutory Health Insurances. Moreover, the BZÄK managed to fix a re-evaluation of the current financial limit by September 2023.

Corporate dentistry

Investor-driven chains of dental practices are seen very critically by the German Dental Association and other dental organisations. The BZÄK observes persistent trend with concern; as companies and investors are currently not subject to the regulations of professional law that protects patients.

The BZÄK considers it particularly problematic that capital investors hope for a high return from dental medical care centres, and the following worrying developments, already observable in other European countries, may therefore occur:

- An influence on the dentist's freedom of therapy

- Losses in the quality of the treatment
- Higher billing volume for patient treatments; more services are billed as in comparison groups.
- While at the same time dentists are paid a lower wage.

A possible solution to the problems described above could be a change in the Dentistry Act, which the BZÄK intends to introduce. The amendment is intended to ensure that all forms of professional practice must be based on the dentist's own responsibility, independence and non-commercial activity. In addition, conditions must be created for legal persons under private law whose business purpose is the practice of dentistry, which guarantee the independence of the members of the profession also for this form of professional practice. This could be ensured, for example, by means of regulations on profit sharing, majorities of company shares and voting rights or chamber supervision.

Remuneration of dental services / Changes in fees

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Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day

The World Oral Health Day, as promoted by the FDI and its regional organizations, is not celebrated by the German Dental Association. The German national day on oral health has been established for nearly over 30 years and is celebrated on the 25th September each year. It is not possible to adapt the German Day of Dental Health to the 20th March, since the national day is planned and prepared well in advance with many actors (health insurance companies, municipalities, schools, regional dental associations...). Since the events in Germany are planned with a lead time of up to 24 months, the planning is already complete for 2024 and 2025.

Further information on activities

In 2022, almost all international activities and national conferences took place and there were no further restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic. For example, the "European Day" (*Europatag*) was organized in Brussels in April 2022. The conference topic was digitalization in dentistry, its prospects and challenges. Another example was the yearly general assembly of the Bundeszahnärztekammer. For the first time since the pandemic outbreak it was again possible to invite international guests to the event.

Major concerns for the German Dental Association

- The adjustment of the **remuneration scheme** for dentists to Germany's current economic development continues to be of great importance for the German dentists.
- **Investor-driven dentistry** and the resulting dangers for the liberal profession as well as the hitherto inadequate supervision of investor-driven dental practices by the regional chambers is a major challenge for the German Dental Association.

- The **digitalization** of patient files and dental practices as well as the exchange of medical information continues to pose challenges for the dental profession, as many questions of data protection and liability have not yet been conclusively clarified on political level.

Discussion points for the ERO general assembly

- Reduction of consumption of free sugars (public health approach)
- Digitalization of dentistry, protection of sensitive (medical) data
- Better cooperation between different medical disciplines