

European Regional Organisation of the FDI

National Report

ERO Plenary Session Almaty, Kazakhstan 24 – 25 April 2020

Country: Poland

Association: Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists

Changes in the association and its organisation

The Polish National Committee for ERO FDI is formed by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists and the Polish Dental Society.

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists is the main professional organization in Poland. It is the organizational body of the professional self-government of physicians and dental practitioners who are associated in the chambers with equal status. Membership is mandatory. Every physician and every dental practitioner who holds the right to practice the profession in Poland is a member of the chamber by virtue of the law. There are 23 Regional Chambers and a separate chamber of military physicians and dentists. The Polish Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists coordinates the work of regional chambers.

There were no major changes regarding the organization and tasks of the chambers during the last year. The main activities of the chambers include:

- awarding the right to practice as a physician or dentist and maintaining the register of physicians and dentists entitled to exercise the profession in Poland;
- representing and protecting the professions;
- setting principles of professional ethics;
- supervising the professional conduct (acting as medical courts imposing disciplinary sanctions);
- co-operating in matters of medical and dental education – especially postgraduate training (continuing professional development, including specialist training);
- expressing opinions on draft legislation and health issues.

The international activities of the Supreme Chamber are coordinated by the Centre of International Cooperation with a board of 7 persons, incl. 2 dental practitioners: dr Anna Lella and dr Radosław Maksymowicz, and legal-administrative assistance of Marek Szewczyński from the Supreme Chamber's office.

Trends and developments:

in professional politics

In January the government submitted to the parliament an extensive draft law with amendments to the law on the professions of physicians and dentist.

Part of the new proposals were elaborated in cooperation with the dental and medical professions and relate to changes in postgraduate training – the postgraduate internship, specialist training and training in narrower fields of medicine and dental medicine.

Also changes regarding the access to the two professions for non-EU nationals are proposed. These were not discussed with the Chamber and are not in line with the Chamber's opinion.

The legislative procedure is ongoing in the Parliament – we are monitoring it and we will actively present our views at the meetings of the parliamentary Commission of Health.

in educational politics

Continuing dental education, which is obligatory in Poland, is administered by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. The contents and quality of continuing education courses are supervised by Regional Chambers.

The Chamber holds the register of providers of continuing professional education events.

There is a wide offer of courses and training conferences in Poland.

Many regional Chambers organize courses and other forms of education, they are generally free of charge. The role of the Chamber in continuing education is increasing. In Regional Chambers "Educational Centres" are being opened in many districts. The e-learning is rapidly developing in Poland, even though this form of education is still not as wide as we could wish.

in health and social politics

The government announced its plans to introduce a new "sugar" tax which would apply to soft and energy drinks. We request that this additional income be directed to financing of medical care. The draft of this legal act is not fully prepared yet, however.

in the insurance system

(incl. the public health insurance and private insurance schemes)

No major changes in the reporting period. Public expenditure on oral care is still low, and the private insurance market has not yet developed well.

In January the Dental Practitioners' Commission of the Supreme Chamber initiated an action aimed at changing the terms of contracts between dental care providers and the National Health Fund. The action aims to adapt the terms of the contracts for the provision of publicly funded services to the actual current costs of provision of dental care.

Dentists are encouraged to submit requests to the Fund to renegotiate the contracts due to significant change of the conditions - new obligations on dentists resulting in a significant financial burden, the amount of remuneration that was kept on a constant level for many years, and sometimes even reduced.

In addition, the contracts for the provision of such services, contrary to the official announcements of the Fund, were not adjusted financially to reflect the increase of costs of providing benefits was made.

A template of the motion to the Fund was developed by the Supreme Chamber together with instructions and forwarded - for further dissemination - to Regional Chambers. A website was created with links to websites of the Regional Medical Councils where materials regarding this action can be found and downloaded. The action has just begun and the Commission will coordinate it.

Corporate Dentistry:

position of NDA towards dental chains

Until now the Chamber has not taken any official position towards dental chains since this is not yet occurring in a way it is in some other European countries.

In Poland there are chains like LUX MED, Enel-Med, Medicover which now cover also dental care services..

Also, it is visible that there is a growing interest in investing into setting up dental care facilities by commercial entities. According to a consulting company Upper Finance, which operates also in the field of healthcare, the process of consolidation of dental market has been ongoing in Poland since 2014 and currently the three largest players in this sector: LUX MED, Medicover and Enel-Med, have a total of approx. 400 dental offices which amounts to less than 5 % of dental market.

In the opinion of Upper Finance there is a huge interest in the process of further consolidation of the Polish dentistry, both from industry investors and private equity funds.

problems with dental chains and possible solutions

The possible problems concerning the dental chains owned by individuals or companies formed by persons who are not dental professionals will most likely be similar to those already indicated by colleagues from other countries and in the ERO 2018 Resolution on third party financed dental ambulatory healthcare centres run by non-dentists.

This model of providing dental care is in our view likely to be profit-driven and in consequence it may influence decisions about dental therapy, encourage overtreatment and compromise quality of dental care, influence negatively dental care systems.

The Polish Chamber since a few years advocates an amendment in Polish law whereby in every healthcare facility, regardless of who is its legal owner, the chief executive officer should be a medical professional (medical doctor or dentist) who is bound to act in accordance with the principles of medical and dental ethics not only when providing treatment himself but also within the managerial activities.

Changes in fees:

No major changes in the reporting period.

Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day:

Each year Polish dentists and students of dentistry are celebrating the World Oral Health Day and organize various events to promote oral health and to raise public awareness of its significance.

Numerous events are taking place – e.g. press conferences, articles and interviews in media, posts on social media, posters, screening tests, art competitions in kindergartens.

Further information (activities):

What are your 3 main concerns?

In fact, we can repeat the 3 concerns already indicated in the previous report, since not much has changed in this regard:

- too many administrative requirements related to the exercise of dental profession which are time consuming and costly;
- lack of understanding among the decision makers of the significance of oral health.
- dramatically low level of public expenditure on healthcare in Poland, incl. oral care – private expenditure, although rising, is not enough to properly cover the oral health needs of population;

3 points you would like to discuss

- continue the cooperation with universities and young dentists/students (EDSA).
- the development of dental chains (corporate dentistry as referred to be the CED) should be closely monitored by ERO, also with a focus on countries which are not in the EU/EEA, and experiences on how to oppose it should be exchanged and analysed;
- 3D printing in dentistry;



Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists

Anna Lella

Marek Szewczyński