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Planned budget constraints for dental services jeopardises patient treatment

Appeal to patients: Start your perio treatment this year

BDIZ EDI strongly encourages patients in Germany to start their periodontal treatment this year—because next year, the approved funds for the systematic treatment of periodontitis and other periodontal diseases could already be withdrawn.

The culprit is Federal Health Minister Karl Lauterbach's Financial Stabilization Act for Statutory Health Insurance, intended to reintroduce budgeting for contractual dental services starting on 1 January 2023. Technically, this involves limiting the increase in point values for 2023 to at most 0.75 percentage points, and for 2024, to at most 1.5 percentage points of contributory income for the respective year. In more understandable terms, this means a reduction of €120 million and €340 million, respectively, in funds available for the treatment of patients.

The prevention concept for periodontitis treatment—introduced as recently as 2021 by explicit agreement with the Federal Ministry of Health to treat the common disease periodontitis systematically and with great prospects of success—is seriously endangered. The need for treatment in Germany is demonstrably. Every other adult suffers from periodontitis requiring treatment. The Ministry of Health

had provided the necessary funds, but these are to be cancelled as of 2023, when budgeting will take effect.

No implant treatment in the periodontally compromised dentition

BDIZ EDI President Christian Berger commented: "There are many reasons for dentists and their patients to oppose the planned budget constraints. For example, there have been significant cost increases for in-office hygiene. Fewer young dentists are establishing their own practice in view of rampant bureaucracy, high operating costs. And wages for the dental team are rising. For us oral implantologists, an important point is that we cannot perform implant treatment in the periodontally compromised dentition—periodontitis must be healed first."

The promising 2021 prevention concept for periodontitis treatment represents a

milestone and is based on systematic and long-term treatment. If left untreated, however, periodontitis will cause tooth loss. Periodontitis is also associated with severe general cardiovascular diseases and diabetes mellitus. "The budget constraints of Financial Stabilization Act will reduce this revolutionary new therapeutic approach to absurdity", said Christian Berger.

The BDIZ EDI stands with the German Dental Association and the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Dentists in their criticism of the planned law. Signature campaigns, protest activities and a petition against the budget cuts, which massively affect dentists and their patients in Germany, are currently underway. BDIZ EDI calls on the affected patients covered by statutory health insurance to initiate their planned periodontal treatment this year to ensure the cost is covered.

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