

## General Meeting 2023 in Kiel

# BDIZ EDI reacts to political situation

First the pandemic, then the health care austerity bill. No one in the BDIZ EDI is surprised that the current Federal Minister of Health immediately identified those who have to foot the bill: the outpatient sector and the dentists and general practitioners, their employees and of course their patients. What the BDIZ EDI has set up in 2022/2023 to provide assistance to its members was revealed at this year's General Meeting, which was embedded in the specialist Expert Conference in Kiel.

In his review before the General Meeting in Kiel, BDIZ EDI President Christian Berger reported on the association's work over the past year. We reproduce his political statement here in full.

## Statement by Christian Berger

"There is one major issue that has been bothering us for the past year: the Statutory Health Insurance (SHI) Financial Stabilisation Act and the associated budgeting of dental services. Why am I talking about budgeting here? Because it also affects the systematic treatment of periodontitis, which has received new service codes effective 1 July 2021 in accordance with the S3 guideline. The Federal Joint Committee (G-BA), the highest decision-

making body of the joint self-government of physicians, dentists, hospitals and health insurance funds in Germany, has declared and evaluated these services as independent services in its BEMA fee schedule.

This is a good step in the right direction, but unfortunately adequate positions in the German Standard Schedule of Fees for Dentist (GOZ)—the schedule applies to patients with private health insurance, PHI—lacks the appropriate positions. Unfortunately, the "old" GOZ service codes from 2012/1988 no longer correspond to the current guideline-based standard. This is a dilemma that the BDIZ EDI has been pointing out for years: Privately insured patients are increasingly being treated as second-class patients, and a comparison with the new SHI rules for periodontal treatment makes this all too clear.

I would now like to turn to the work of the BDIZ EDI, because we are preparing our own response to the new law and to the effects on the GOZ—this is our main topic!

**1** First things first: The new BDIZ EDI table—which all members received

in May—shows a new accounting method for periodontal treatment according to the GOZ. The new approach uses the analogue billing concept. For the first time, we have compared the "new" periodontal services with analogue positions in the 2022 table. We have made this even more specific in the 2023 table and extended it to all periodontal services.

Our opinion, and that of many dental chambers, is as follows: Now that science has provided a valuable basis for periodontal therapy with the new S3 guideline and the G-BA has set significantly higher reimbursement rates for SHI patients than in the past with the BEMA schedule, this systematic course of therapy must also be implemented as an overall concept for PHI patients in accordance with the guideline in order to ensure treatment that is equivalent to the state of the art as now reflected by SHI. Kerstin Salhoff and I have explained our approach in two webinars. Our proposed solution to the GOZ dilemma is called analogue billing. We have deliberately proposed low multipliers that only slightly exceed the BEMA fees. In the event of disputes with PHI representa-



## Expert Symposium and EuCC

Of course, the work of the BDIZ EDI during the year is not limited to entrepreneurial/business and political aspects. The Expert Symposium took place live in Cologne in 2023, as usual during the carnival celebrations. The 18<sup>th</sup> European Consensus Conference has also produced another guideline: short, angulated and reduced-diameter implants—2<sup>nd</sup> update. The date for the 19<sup>th</sup> Expert Symposium in Cologne has been set and the topic has been selected: imaging techniques in oral implantology.

## Webinars

The “BDIZ EDI informs” webinar series has been running since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. “To date, we

have had no fewer than 20,000 participants,” reported the BDIZ EDI President, who presented a new format to the General Meeting. “With the ‘Implantology step by step’ webinars with Professor Einwag, we want to professionalise our online continuing-education series, running individual modules through our trainings, each building on the previous one.”

“Implantology step by step” covers everything worth knowing, from planning, preparation and implantation to provisional restoration, prosthetics, orthodontics and billing for these therapies, so that newcomers can get started in oral implantology and experienced users can expand their level of knowledge. The training series is available as a complete package and in the form of individual streamed recordings.

## Curricula

In October 2023, the 25<sup>th</sup> Curriculum Implantology by the BDIZ EDI and the University of Cologne will be launched. The Curriculum is a success story with around 900 participants having successfully completed the course to date. More than 80 per cent of them continue as members of the BDIZ EDI.

## Communication

In order to save on money and other resources, the BDIZ EDI has been keeping its members informed with its electronic newsletter for several years. Subscribers regularly receive news about current developments and, of course, about upcoming online and face-to-face events.

tives, we will help the members concerned to assert their legitimate fee claims.

The table also clearly shows that for many periodontal services we dentists have to charge the 2.5 multiplier rate of the GOZ 2012 or even exceed it in order to receive the remuneration for comparable services that the SHI will pay on the basis of the new BEMA schedule.

**2.** Over the past decades, we dentists in Germany have achieved little or nothing in our dialogue or discussions with politicians, and we are unlikely to achieve anything in the future either. The online petition initiated a year ago by dentists in Bavaria to increase the GOZ point value is not making any progress.

Our association was founded in 1989 in response to the 1988 GOZ. Since then, we have gone down many different roads—even to the Federal Constitutional Court. Now is the time for us to offer our members solutions to find a way out of the GOZ dilemma. The BDIZ EDI table can help from a business perspective.

As early as 2022, we had decided to take legal action against the unequal treat-

ment in the fee schedules and against the 65-year standstill in the GOZ point value. Our legal counsel, Professor Ratajczak, wrote to the Federal Minister of Health, Dr Karl Lauterbach, in May, asking for a statement. The deadline for the response from the BMG is now approaching. If there is no response or if the response is unsatisfactory, six dentists—mainly from the Board of the BDIZ EDI—will take the matter to the Berlin Administrative Court.

We deplore the fact that the legal requirements of Section 15 of the German Dentistry Act (ZHG) have not been complied with for decades by failing to adjust the dentists’ fee schedule. The Federal Government seems to have no problem regularly adjusting the veterinary fee schedule to changing economic conditions, most recently on 1 October 2022. This unequal treatment violates the general principle of equality (Article 3 [1] of the German Basic Law) and freedom of dentists to practise their profession (Article 12 [1] of the German Basic Law).

(Editor’s note: In the meantime, the lawsuit is being prepared; there has been no response from the Ministry.)

**3.** I would like to refer once again to the SHI Financial Stabilisation Act I mentioned at the beginning. Here we have given our members ammunition in the form of practice posters and information leaflets to point out to their patients who is really to blame for the limitation of funds for dental care: It is not the dentist, nor the health insurance company, but the Federal Government that is responsible for the budget.

Dear members, your BDIZ EDI thus helps and supports you in matters of billing, on three levels: business, political and legal! You will find my remarks and the associated papers on our website and as a focus topic in the next [EDI Journal]. Let us not forget to mention the billing hotline with Kerstin Salhoff, which we have been offering our members since 2017, answering their billing questions every Tuesday from 8 am to noon.”



Christian Berger (left) was lecturing at the four-chamber-meeting in Karlovy Vary.

The newsletter is currently subscribed by 2,300 members.

### Consensus Conferences

The BDIZ EDI not only participates in the Consensus Conferences on implantology, but also in the guideline conferences of DG PARO, DGI and DGZMK, in order to contribute the broad professional competence of its oral implantologists. "It is important for us to be represented there so we can respond in good time to any developments that seem to be going in the wrong direction," said Berger.

### Expert opinions

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Experts on Implantology on behalf of the Implantology Consensus Conference was held for the first time under the leadership of Dr Stefan Liepe, who has chaired the Expert Committee since 2022. Christian Berger thanked this year's cooperation partner, the Schleswig-Holstein Dental Chamber, and particularly its President, Dr Michael Brandt.

### Europe

In May 2023, the BDIZ EDI actively participated in a four-chamber meeting of the dental chambers of the Czech Republic, Saxony, Bavaria and Austria in Karlovy Vary.

The BDIZ EDI was represented by Jörg Neugebauer and Christian Berger, who gave lectures during the scientific programme.

The Europe Symposium was held in Valpolicella together with OEMUS MEDIA AG. The BDIZ EDI had its own booth in the exhibition.

### IDS 2023

IDS 2023 took place in Cologne in March and celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For the first time, the BDIZ EDI explored its current topics in the form of live recorded interviews. One of the topics was the legal action taken by the BDIZ EDI in the matter of GOZ, the German Standard Schedule of Fees for Dentists. "Participation is a must for us to 'stay in the game' and to present ourselves together with our partner associations as the international point of contact for all questions relating to oral implantology, dental billing and health care law," said the BDIZ EDI President.

### Publications, web, social networks

The BDIZ EDI provides its members with a wide range of information that can be accessed online via its website, newsletter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Suggestion: Be sure you use the mem-

bers' area on the web. This is the only way to access webinars, download important forms or checklists, and browse the case law database.

### The Board

The work of the BDIZ EDI Board did not go unmentioned in Berger's review of the year: "Once again, our Board members have worked with great passion and commitment to provide you with valuable information and our recommendations. I would like to thank Joachim E. Zöllner, Jörg Neugebauer, Detlef Hildebrand, Stefan Liepe, Wolfgang Neumann, Freimut Vizethum, Renate Tischer, Nathalie Khasin and since 2021 Markus Tröltzsch!"

### Membership

The BDIZ EDI has seen a significant increase in membership, particularly through its webinar series and the Curriculum. "However," said Berger, "it is becoming clear that we still have many first-generation members who have been working in their practices for more than 20 or even 30 years, but there are also members who are gradually retiring from their practices. Most of them nevertheless choose to remain members—which makes us very happy. This reflects clearly and favourably on the association and its work."

On the other hand, the association also needs new blood to remain strong in the face of internal and external challenges and to be able to respond to new laws, regulations and ordinances. "I would like to appeal to you to help us maintain our strength. Talk to the young people in your practice, show them what we can do. After all, this is what we have demonstrated, not least in these difficult times."

Finally, BDIZ EDI President Christian Berger extended his thanks to the staff of the BDIZ EDI: Brigitte Nötzel in Cologne, who had run the BDIZ EDI office in Cologne until the end of 2022; Helga Karanikas in Munich; and Kerstin Salhoff, who is in charge of the billing hotline. He also thanked Anita Wuttke for her commitment

to the media work of the association. She is also responsible for European affairs and is Editor-in-Chief of the trade magazines *BDIZ EDI konkret* and *EDI Journal*. She also conceived, marketed and presented the “BDIZ EDI informs” webinar series.

## Continuing professional development

For years, Prof. Joachim E. Zöller has been the Scientific Director of the association. His duties include the search for suitable topics and speakers at the Expert Symposia, the European Consensus Conferences and the annual symposia. The BDIZ EDI Vice President is the initiator and responsible head of the Curricula Implantology, which he has repeatedly modernised together with Prof. Nickenig and Prof. Neugebauer.

Curriculum 24 has now been completed with two parallel courses. Curriculum 25 will start in October. The participants were highly satisfied with the highly relevant Curriculum Implantology of the BDIZ EDI with their modular design, Zöller reported. “Previously, we’d be getting participants who had already placed a thousand implants or more. Today, the trend is that we are seeing newcomers to the profession.”

Zöller considers the uniform generally accepted professional opinion taught in the Curriculum the secret of its success—being able to draw on reliable sources at this stage, as a guideline to live by for newcomers to the profession. He announced the establishment of the additional Curriculum South in Munich due to great demand. Although he himself has since retired as director at the University of Cologne, the rooms and facilities of the Anatomical Institute, he said, were still available for the Curriculum.

For Zöller, the Curriculum Implantology and the Expert Symposium in Cologne are the flagships of the BDIZ EDI. The annual guidelines developed by the European Consensus Conference are pioneering and groundbreaking endeavours. Zöller announced that the next, that is, the



In Kiel, the Board reported on its work during the past year.

19<sup>th</sup> Expert Symposium on 11 February 2024 will address the topic of imaging techniques in oral implantology.

With its combination of the Expert Symposium and the European Consensus Conference, the BDIZ EDI promotes new scientific findings every year. Currently, the 2023 guideline on “Short, angulated and reduced-diameter implants—2<sup>nd</sup> update” is available.

As told, Zöller considered the European Consensus Conference of the BDIZ EDI the top source of received knowledge on the European level—even if it is not always fully in agreement with official guidelines.

The Chair of the Expert Committee, Dr Stefan Liepe, thanked Dr Michael Brandt, President of the Schleswig-Holstein Dental Chamber, this year’s cooperation partner of the Expert Committee in Kiel. He announced the 34<sup>th</sup> Expert Conference on behalf of the Consensus Conference to be held in 2024 in collaboration with the Saxony Dental Chamber in Dresden.

## Increased functionality

In his role as Secretary and Managing Director, Liepe explained the restructuring process that BDIZ EDI was currently undergoing, with the digital transformation of many processes and the relocation of the BDIZ EDI office to Munich. This will also be accompanied by a change of

tax adviser. The change to the Munich Association Court and the change in banking relationship have already been completed. The new association software will allow invoices and office documents to be increasingly generated digitally. Liepe held out the prospect of cost savings in the future.

## Finances

Treasurer Dr Wolfgang Neumann presented the budget. In order to be able to finance the digitalisation mentioned by Managing Director Dr Stefan Liepe and the legal action against the non-adjustment of the point value before the Administrative Court, reserves have been formed accordingly. Following the presentation of the budget for 2024 and the report of the auditor, Dr Neumann, who confirmed that the accounts had been kept in a sound and proper manner, the General Assembly unanimously granted discharge to the Board of Directors and approved the budget for 2024. For several years now, provisions have been made in accordance with Board’s instructions in order to be able to finance major projects (legal steps to be taken in the area of the Standard Schedule of Fees [GOZ], publications such as the new BDIZ EDI fees table, etc.).