

## Medizinische Versorgungszentren

### Ambulatory Health Care Centres

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#### Summary

The demographic, technological and economic changes in Germany require a profound reform of the health care system, especially concerning the ambulant medical care. For many years too strict legal regulations prohibited the development of adequate care structures; the major reform of 2004 has introduced new tools to be used by “entrepreneurial doctors”; however, these tools are still in their experimental phase. The changing demands include an increasing specialisation of the ambulant medical care, lack of data and thus knowledge exchange between different doctors treating the same patient, and its insufficient cost effectiveness. In some regions of Germany there is also an alarming shortage of doctors and medical care. Another challenge lies in the increase and therefore growing impact of chronic diseases.

This article focuses on the weaknesses and challenges that public health professionals are facing in Germany today. One way of matching the diverse needs is to establish ambulatory health care centres and thereby to locally concentrate interdisciplinary expertise. The main objective of these polyclinics is to create patient-oriented structures and to ensure flexibility and economic efficiency of integrated care as well as sustainability within the health sector.