

## About the German Medical Association

The German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer) is the central organisation in the system of medical self-administration in Germany. As the joint association of the State Chambers of Physicians (*Landesärztekammer*), it represents the interests of 470,422 physicians (status: 31/12/2013) in matters relating to professional policy, and plays an active role in opinion-forming processes with regard to health and social policy and in legislative procedures.

The German Medical Association arose from the Working Group of West German Medical Associations, which was founded in 1947. Following the reunification of Germany, the system of medical self-administration was extended to the former East German states, where State Chambers of Physicians were also established.

Today, the German Medical Association is the joint association of the 17 State Chambers of Physicians, which are registered corporations under public law. It is itself an unincorporated association, and the individual physician is only indirectly a member of the German Medical Association via compulsory membership of his or her local State Chamber of Physicians.

### The role of the German Medical Association

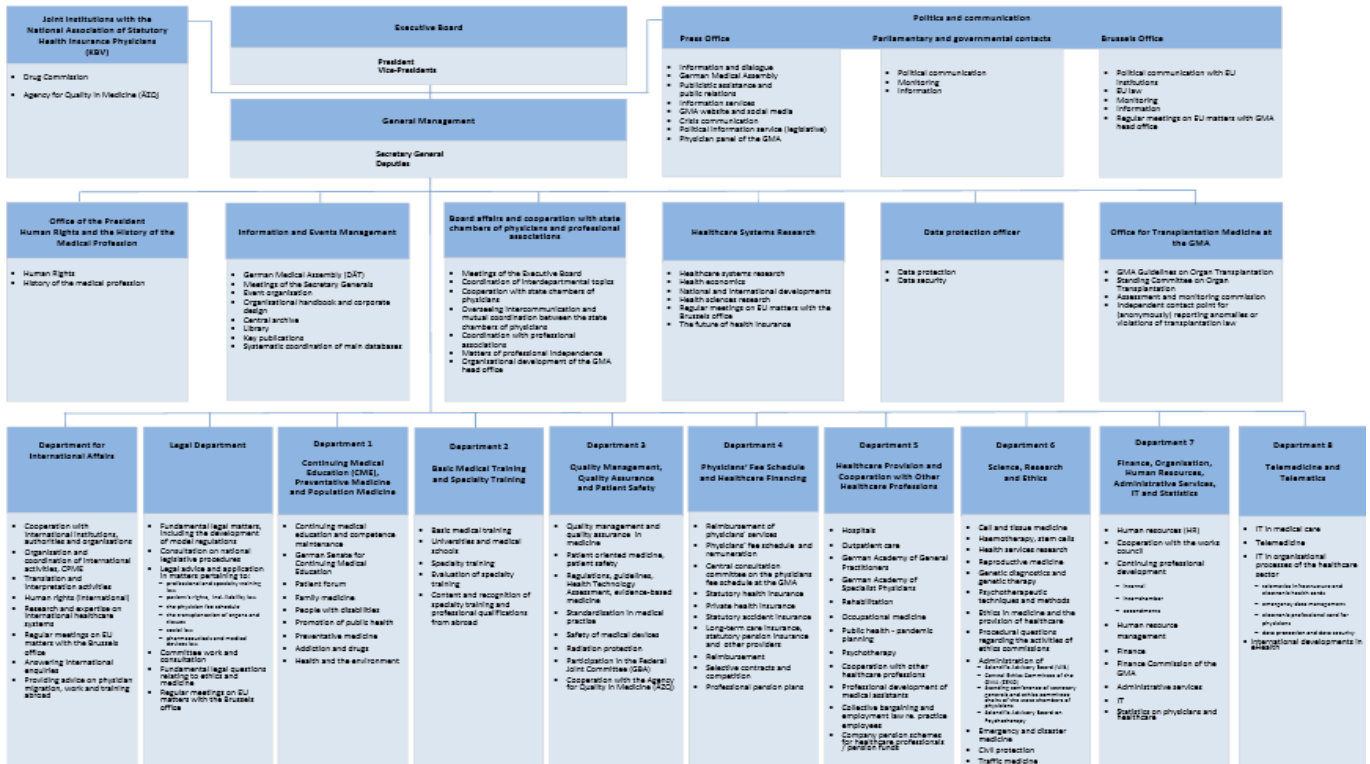
- Ensuring good medical care of the population by way of a constant exchange of experience between the State Chambers of Physicians and the coordination of their goals and activities. Mediating the exchange of opinions and experience between the State Chambers of Physicians.
- Cultivating a feeling of unity among all physicians practising in Germany by advising and informing them of all important processes and activities relevant to the medical profession, healthcare and society.
- Achieving the most uniform possible regulation of professional duties and principles for medical practise in all fields.
- Safeguarding the professional interests of the medical profession in matters which go beyond the jurisdiction of a single state (Land). Contact with the Federal Government, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat (the two houses of parliament) and political parties.
- Communicating the standpoints of the medical profession on matters relating to health policy and medicine.
- Promoting continuing medical education.
- Promoting quality assurance.
- Establishing and maintaining good relations with medical associations and the medical science community abroad.
- Overseeing, in particular, the regulation of the:
  - Professional code (*Berufsordnung*) which regulates the ethical and professional obligations of physicians among themselves and vis-à-vis patients. This includes, for example, the obligation to maintain medical confidentiality (i.e. the physician must maintain confidentiality as regards everything which is confided in him by the patient or otherwise becomes known to him in his capacity as a physician).
  - Speciality training regulations (*Weiterbildungsordnung*) which define the content, duration and objectives of speciality training and specialist designations.

## Organisational structure

The headquarters of the German Medical Association are located in Berlin. The main structures of the organisation include the Office of the Secretary General, the Department for International Affairs, the Press Office and seven additional departments, each with a specific focus on certain aspects of healthcare or the medical profession.

Organisational Chart of the German Medical Association  
Federation of the German Chambers of Physicians

Status 22/09/1



In addition to this, separate bodies such as the Scientific Advisory Board and the Drug Commission have their own statutes and rules of procedure. Their members are elected by the Executive Board of the German Medical Association or the German Medical Assembly.

The Scientific Advisory Board of the German Medical Association consists of 37 scientists from virtually every medical discipline. It advises the medical profession on matters relating to medical science that arise in the context of the preparation and implementation of laws concerning the healthcare system and the medical profession. In addition, it draws up guidelines, recommendations and statements concerning diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, taking both ethical and legal aspects into consideration.

The Drug Commission of the German Medical Association is an expert scientific committee with 40 full and 110 extraordinary members from various medical disciplines. It provides the medical profession with information on efficient and effective drug therapy, and has developed a database for the spontaneous recording of adverse drug reactions (side-effects).