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Patients' organizations request shorter G-BA deadlines

Berlin. According to a leading patient representative, statutory health insurance members should have faster access to diagnostic and treatment options. "We need reforms here," said **Martin Danner**, managing director of the Federal Association of Self-Help Organizations. Danner is a non-voting patient representative of the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA). According to him, the G-BA needs to be bound to stricter deadlines. The request supports the motion by Health Minister **Jens Spahn** that policy makers can intervene, if deadlines are not met. Read more at www.medinsight.de.

eHealth: Faster access to digital medicine

Berlin. In a joint discussion paper, eight health industry associations – BIO Deutschland, Bitkom, bvitg, BVMed, Spectaris, VDGH, vfa, and ZVEI – presented proposals for the faster inclusion of digital health services into standard care. The associations expect that this will improve patient benefits and treatment processes. The cross-industry paper titled "Zugang zur Regelversorgung digitaler Versorgungsangebote" [Access to Standard Care for Digital Healthcare Options] is available at www.bvmed.de/ehealth.

First Notified Body (BSI UK) is notified under the MDR

Brussels. In January, the very first Notified Body (BSI United Kingdom) was officially notified in the European Commission database NANDO under the new Medical Device Regulation. In the context of a potential hard-Brexit it is important for the medtech industry that a deal addressing the status of all UK NBs is urgently agreed upon.

New members on the healthcare system advisory council

Berlin. **Jens Spahn** has appointed a new Advisory Council for the Assessment of Developments in the Healthcare System as of February 1. The new members are economist **Prof. Dr. Beate Jochimsen** and the physician **Prof. Dr. Christof von Kalle**.

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Health Ministry wants to speed up medtech HTA

Berlin. Federal Health Minister **Jens Spahn** wants to accelerate health technology assessment (HTA). In mid-January 2019, Spahn had leaked a first suggestion that under certain conditions the ministry itself should get the power to grant new diagnostic or treatment methods reimbursement status with healthcare funds without prior approval by the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA). After meeting with some resistance from his own party, the Social Democrat coalition partner, the G-BA, and the sickness funds association, Spahn modified his initiative. He now wants to limit the G-BA processing to a period of two years, after which his ministry would have a say. The proposition is still being discussed within the CDU/CSU-SPD coalition and is now part of the draft law on the implant register.

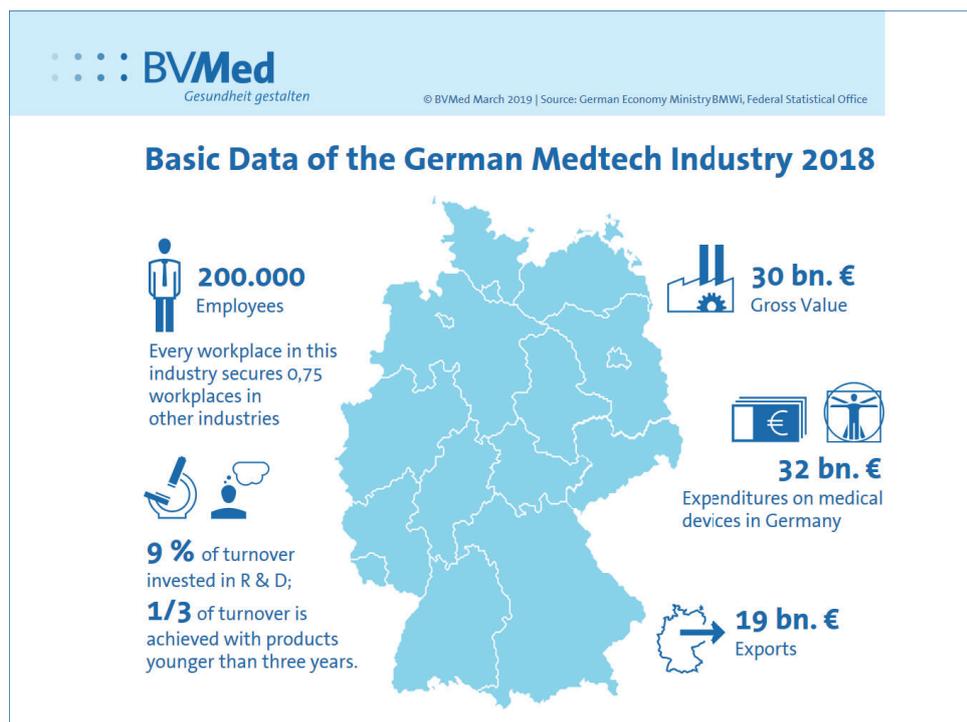
According to the opinion of BVMed, Spahn has sparked a valid and important discussion with his proposal to restructure method assessment by the G-BA. "BVMed supports the new proposals by the Federal Ministry of Health to accelerate and reorganize method assessment. These are steps in the right direction in order to simplify and accelerate the G-BA procedures in the long term," said BVMed CEO **Joachim M. Schmitt**. In the opinion of BVMed, the health minister's proposal would also ensure accelerated approval schemes to include services in the uniform reimbursement catalog for the outpatient care sector (EBM). It is also important to grant manufacturers of the affected medical devices a say in the individual method assessment. More at www.medinsight.de.

Jens Spahn wants to ban tenders for medical aids

Berlin. Health insurance funds will no longer be able to purchase medical technical aids through tenders. This proposal by Federal Minister of Health **Jens Spahn** (CDU) is to be tabled as an amendment to the Medical Appointment Service and Care Law (Terminservice- und Versorgungsgesetz, TSVG), which is currently debated in the German parliament. Patients and those receiving long-term care must be able to trust in the quality of any medical technical aids they need, Mr. Spahn said. So far, the price war for the cheapest offer had often come at the expense of the patients. At present, under certain conditions, health insurance funds are still able to put medical

technical aids such as incontinence, ostomy, or respiration products out to tender. The regulations have recently been tightened with the law regulating the provision of therapeutic products and medical technical aids, Heil- und Hilfsmittelversorgungsgesetz (HHVG), but the funds have not changed their tendering practice.

The German Medtech Association BVMed has called Federal Minister of Health **Jens Spahn**'s plans for a general ban on tenders for medical technical aids "the right way to ensure the quality of the supply of medical technical aids." Read more on this topic at www.medinsight.de.



The German medtech industry has a total turnover of about 30 billion euros and provides 200,000 jobs.