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Jens Spahn's first year in office: The active one

Berlin. **Jens Spahn** has been German Minister of Health for a year now. He has put the office back into the limelight. His daily suggestions, pointed attacks, as well as a large number of draft laws keep health politicians and associations on their toes. It is a positive development for the medtech industry that Spahn intends to accelerate the processes in the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA) in order to introduce cutting-edge technologies in patient care more quickly. A negative issue was the separation of the costs of care from the DRGs. Meanwhile, during the "Implant Files" campaign, he unmistakably backed the medical device approval system.

Health insurance funds generate surplus of 2 billion euros

Berlin. Last year, the health insurance funds generated a surplus of two billion euros, the Federal Ministry of Health reported. Their total reserves thus amounted to 21 billion euros. Health Minister Jens Spahn urged the funds to use the money for quality improvements.

Prof. Gerlach to head Healthcare System Expert Council four more years

Berlin. **Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Gerlach** has been reelected chairman of the Advisory Council for the Assessment of Development in the Healthcare System. The council advises Health Minister **Jens Spahn** and is demanding the digitization of the structures.

Hip and knee implants last longer than expected

Bristol/Berlin. Artificial hip and knee joints serve patients for much longer time than was expected until now. The longevity of eight out of ten knee replacement implants and six out of ten hip replacement implants today is at least 25 years. These data were published in *The Lancet* by a British team at Bristol Medical School (2019; 393: 647-63). "The numbers illustrate the extraordinary success of orthopedic surgery," commented the German Endoprosthetics Association AE. In addition, implant materials, design, and surgery techniques have been continuously improved.

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New law: Introduction of an implant register

Berlin. Healthcare institutions, patients, and manufacturers of implantable medical devices are to participate in an obligatory nationwide implant register. All implantable medical devices must be listed in a device database. Devices that are not listed may no longer be used. This is the result of a draft "Law on the Creation of a German Implant Register (EDIR)" presented by Health Minister **Jens Spahn**. The register will be started for hip and knee endoprostheses as well as breast implants. Other groups of devices will be added over time. The launch will be in summer 2021 at the earliest. The German medtech association BVMed supports Spahn in his plan to establish an implant register in Germany, if the register will be designed as a genuine healthcare register. "The successful implantation of a medical device depends on three factors: a good device, a good surgeon, and good patient compliance. The approach in the draft legislation is one-

sided and focuses too much on the implants," the BVMed statement says. For example, the existing endoprostheses registers showed that implant failure was the least cause of abnormalities. A genuine healthcare register therefore also needs to look at the performance of hospitals and surgeons. A major request of implant manufacturers is that they should be able to access the raw data of the register via "special evaluations." This would be particularly helpful for approval or recertification processes. Equally important are manufacturers' evaluations including suitable information about "user outcomes" or special analyses regarding questions of device and user outcomes that are too positive or too negative. Furthermore, the participation of manufacturers, professional associations, and health insurance associations in the advisory board as well as in evaluations should be regulated by the law. Read more at www.medinsight.de.

Medtech startup pitch 2019: Application is open

Berlin. The German Medical Technology Association (BVMed), venture capitalist Earlybird, insurer Barmer, High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF), NRW.Bank, and the medical technology magazine Medtech Zwo are organizing the second medtech start-up pitch. The pitch is part of the "MedTech Radar Live 2019" conference, which takes place on June 5, 2019, in Berlin (www.bvmed.de/events) and brings young medtech founders together with representatives of the medical technology industry and potential investors. Industry representatives will discuss the challenges of developing new medical technology

solutions, innovations through start-ups, and new cooperation models in healthcare. The conference organizers expect around 150 participants. Start-ups or smaller medtech companies with disruptive and innovative business ideas in health-tech are invited to apply for the "Start-up Pitch" until April 17, 2019, at www.medtechradar.live. The focus is on business ideas dealing with digital health, health services, physical therapies, healthcare, or big data in the medical sector. Read more on this topic at www.medinsight.de.



The 110 medtech companies that took part in the BVMed Autumn Survey cite the well-trained specialists and the good infrastructure, such as transport routes, as the major strengths of Germany as a business location. Frequently cited strengths include the high level of patient care, well-trained doctors, scientists, and engineers.