

Study on medtech innovation obstacles

Berlin. The German Research Ministry has published a study on obstacles to innovation in medical technology. The essence of the study says that there are no crucial barriers which could not be eliminated within the system itself. Nevertheless, there are two important phases in the development of a medical device which experts estimate as problematic: the clinical research and validation, and the transfer to reimbursement by the National Health Service. Study at: www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de/de/2071.php.

Hospital Reform

Berlin. After the first parliamentary consultation of the German Hospital Financing Reform Bill held on November 12, 2008, the decision in the Bundestag is scheduled for February 13, 2009. The law would then be retroactively effective as of January 1, 2009. Overall, the German Federal Government wants this law to improve the financial situation of hospitals starting from 2009.

New Board Member

Berlin. **Christian Weinrank**, 47, is new member of the BVMed board, having assumed his role on November 1. The CEO of Medtronic Germany and Austria succeeds **Carsten Clausen**, who changed from Fresenius to B. Braun. More at: www.bvmed.de (Press).

German medtech industry grows on solid ground

Berlin. Is the German medtech industry hit by the global financial crisis? The sector is 'clearly strained', says **Joachim M. Schmitt**, Managing Director and Member of Board of the German Medical Technology Association, BVMed. But, the good news is, employment is up and, he adds 'We are at the beginning of a medical technology revolution. Overall, healthcare is certainly more panic-proof than, for example, the automobile industry,' said Schmitt in a pre-MEDICA discussion with European Hospital.

'We don't choose when to become ill and require treatment. However, the arrival of the financial crisis in the real economy will inevitably affect our industry, for instance the credit requirements of start-ups or smaller, innovative companies. The general pressure is also reflected in the results of our current autumn survey. The mood in the medical technology industry has significantly deteriorated compared to last year. Around 37 per cent of companies expect significantly improved results for 2008 compared to the previous year, but 28 per cent of companies expect worse results. The

profit situation in the medtech sector is therefore clearly strained.

'BVMed companies are particularly looking for more flexibility with the compensation/accounting systems from healthcare politics. If we are to safeguard the financing of statutory health insurance in the long term we need to discuss new ways, such as preferential tax treatment for innovations. If we are to promote medical progress, we need to do this in a more coordinated way and place more emphasis on quality aspects than the medical technology companies will continue to be the drivers of the healthcare economy for the benefits of patients. Even the financial crisis won't change this.'

Nonetheless, in terms of a global position of German medtech firms are 'well placed', he believes. 'In the promising fields of medicine technology innovation, Germany is in a good position to introduce new products and procedures to the market due to its high number of well-trained doctors, researchers and engineers and high standards in clinical research.' www.bvmed.de (Press).

Expert suggests innovation insurance

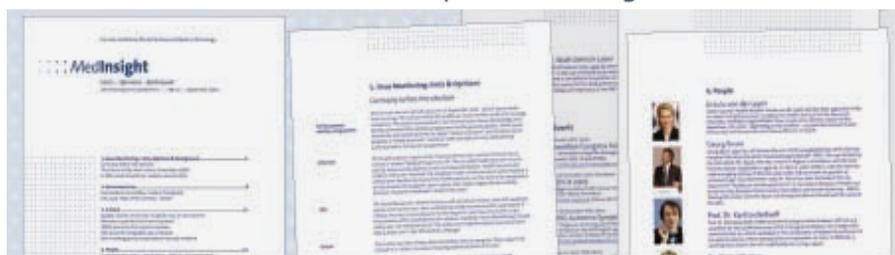
Berlin. Access to the service catalog of the Statutory Health Insurance could become more difficult for new treatment methods after the introduction of the health pool in 2009. **Prof. Dr. Bertram Häussler**, director of the research institute for health IGES, voiced his concern on this matter. Due to the health pool the insurance funds had to monitor the development of costs closely,

because otherwise they would have to charge additional contributions. Modern and mostly expensive therapies would be harder to finance. Prof. Häussler suggests an additional insurance that should cover new treatment methods even in those cases where the insurance funds did not cover the costs yet. The public were prepared to invest more money, he said.

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Facts – Opinions – Background



Berlin. MedInform has published a new issue of MedInsight Germany, a background report authored by the German MedTech experts **Joachim M. Schmitt**

and **Manfred Beeres** together with **Sarah Smiley** from AdvaMed. MedInsight gives the latest news on Europe's biggest medtech market.

Topics from the new issue are e. g.:

German Hospital Financing Reform Bill under discussion; Hospitals under increased pressure in 2009; The chances for outcome research; Medica 2009 review; Documentation: Study on obstacles to innovation in medical technology; „Workshop talks“ on medtech progress; Uniform contribution rate defined; Expert suggests innovation insurance; Cross-sector quality assurance; AdvaMed, EUCOMED and BVMed member companies can receive „MedInsight Germany“ at a discounted subscription price of 600 euros per year (10 issues). The normal subscription fee is 1,200 euros for one year.

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