

# German Medical Association

Federation of the German Chambers of Physicians



## Health System Sustainability with Regard to Global Migration and Refugees: The Case of Germany

Scientific Session of the WMA General Assembly 2016

Taipei, 20 October 2016

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- By the end of 2015, around 1,060,000 refugees had arrived in Germany
- Around 477,000 of them submitted formal applications for asylum.
- The German healthcare system faced the challenge of having to integrate them as quickly as possible.
- For German physicians a patient is a patient and not an asylum seeker, refugee, illegal or undocumented person
- Policies regarding access to healthcare, billing and benefit eligibility vary from state to state and municipality to municipality.
- *“Wir schaffen das” – Yes, we can!*

# Angela Merkel

31st. August 2015



"Unsere Freiheit, unser Rechtsstaat, unsere wirtschaftliche Stärke, die Ordnung, wie wir leben - das ist es, wovon Menschen träumen, die in ihrem Leben Verfolgung, Krieg, Willkür kennengelernt haben."











# Health System Sustainability

## Healthcare system in Germany



- Compulsory statutory health insurance for employees (Bismarck Model)
- Private / public mix of providers and payers
- Public health is mainly the competence of the 16 federal states

# Health System Sustainability

## Medical treatment of refugees in Germany



- Asylum seekers are individuals whose asylum application procedure is still ongoing.
- Federal law grants asylum seekers access to treatment in cases of:
  - Acute illness and pain
  - Emergency treatment
  - Pregnancy, or in cases where women have recently given birth
  - Vaccinations and a compulsory medical examinations
- The costs of providing applicants for asylum with medical care are covered by the federal states and municipalities.
- After 15 months, these individuals become eligible for long-term unemployment benefits and are transferred into the statutory health insurance system.



# Health System Sustainability

## Medical treatment of refugees in Germany



- German Medical Association recommends assimilating asylum seekers into the general social benefits system immediately upon their arrival to avoid a complicated parallel system.
- One solution suggested is the introduction of a health card offering access to a limited range of benefits available to those in the statutory system (“Bremen Model”).

# Health System Sustainability

## Continued challenges



- Providing adequate access to psychotherapeutic care for refugees, many of whom are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Offering stable perspectives and security in life
- Meeting the medical needs of undocumented individuals (along with their children), who are often hesitant to seek out medical treatment due to fear of deportation.
- Encouraging integration by allowing to work

# Health System Sustainability with Regard to Refugees

## Résumée



- **Yes, we could.....**
- The refugees of 2015 did not challenge the sustainability of our health care system. The real threats to health care sustainability are demography, medical progress and equitable financing.....

- To create reliable healthcare conditions, it is important that we devise and implement national solutions which
  - Lower the threshold for healthcare access for refugees
  - Reduce red tape
  - Expand human and financial resources in the public health sector
  - Clarify medical, administrative, financial and legal accountability among public authorities
- A consistent approach is needed at the national, state and municipal levels.
- Transparency of funding, including at the EU level.



A clear blue sky filled with numerous balloons of various colors including orange, white, and red. Some balloons are clustered together, while others are scattered across the frame. Wispy white clouds are visible in the lower half of the image. The text "Thank you for your attention" is centered in the lower half of the image in a white, italicized font.

*Thank you for your attention*



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# Thank you!

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