



vascular professional

news & articles for phlebologists



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Intergrated Care Structure in a New Way

MICADO HEALTH CARE GmbH: New management companies in the healthcare system in Germany improve integrated care structures for outpatient operations

BY MATTHIAS HEILMANN,

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Among other things, integrated care means better networking of medical service providers. To this end, in Germany are contracts concluded between health insurers and a wide range of service providers, such as primary care physicians, specialists in private practice, hospitals and pharmacies. This concept enables physicians to offer their patients special forms of treatment and bill them via the health insurance fund, even though these are not actually part of the regular list of services provided by the respective health insurance fund.

However, so called IV contracts (contracts for integrated care) or contracts for „special care“ are neither the norm nor available nationwide in Germany, even after 20 years. If patients want to take advantage of a certain therapy, they may have to drive hundreds of kilometers to find a contract physician. At the same time, doctors are often just able to offer many modern therapies to patients with private health insurance or to self-pay patients. This is where management companies, such as MICADO Health Care GmbH (MICADO), come into play. On the one hand, they conclude contracts with numerous health insurance companies, which benefit from being able to offer their clients a broader range of services, and on the other hand with physicians, who can bill the management company for these treatments on an extrabudgetary basis and without any problems. In the field of phlebology and vascular surgery, MICADO offers minimally invasive endoluminal treatment methods for varicose veins, such as laser therapy and radiofrequency therapy. Reimbursement is made promptly via performance-based flat rates, which also include material costs incurred.

MICADO stands for „Minimally Invasive Surgery & Applicable Outpatient Surgery“. Originally, this was an initiative of contract physicians from Hamburg who had made it their goal to establish and expand cooperation between health insurance companies and physicians in order to make hospital-replacing operations possible. The management company MICADO Health Care GmbH, which was founded in 2004, is still working up to this day according to these guidelines. However, MICADO now offers much more than simply conclude contracts to ensure solid financing for outpatient surgery.

As a contractual partner of this management company, physicians are able to use the available contracts with health insurers of MICADO. MICADO's flat rates, some of which are similar to diagnosis-based per-case flat rates in hospitals, but some of which have fixed prices, include around 15,000 OPS (operation and procedure code) numbers. Doctors are free to choose which contractual services are to be integrated. In addition, billing is significantly simplified thanks to management companies. MICADO, for example, has a so-called online grouper. This system determines the possible billing method (fixed price or DRG - Diagnosis Related Groups system) for your treatment, as well as the associated remuneration. In addition, clients receive all the necessary information there that must be taken into account when billing for the individual treatment case. You only have exclusive access to this online grouper as a contractual partner.

MICADO currently is running contracts with over 40 different company health insurance funds (BKKs), including Siemens Betriebskrankenkasse, pronova BKK, vidva BKK, BKK MTU, BMW BKK, Continentale BKK, BKK Linde, BKK Stadt Augsburg and BKK Pfalz. There are also contracts with the Hanseatische Krankenkasse (HEK) (Han-

seatic Insurance Fund) and the Postbeamtenkrankenkasse (Insurance Fund of Mail Officers). Service providers wishing to join the MICADO contracts need to be licensed as a specialist in private practice, an MVZ (Medical Care Center), a practice or day clinic, or a hospital. Ideally, the physician or hospital can provide a surgical, multidisciplinary or multisectoral range of care and meet minimum surgical volumes. In addition, the surgeries to be performed must be part of the contractually agreed service catalog with the health insurers.

Physicians who wish to conclude a contract with MICADO are automatically provided to the „Internal Area“ after registration. There they can download a performance questionnaire, complete it and send it to the management company by mail or fax. This is then checked there.

If the conditions for participation are met, the physician can download the cooperation and billing contract from this „Internal Area“, complete it in duplicate and send it to MICADO. The countersigned contract will then be returned to the physician by mail. Once the contract has been signed by both parties, the contract partner is provided with all the necessary forms for billing as well as useful information in the „Internal Area“. Once a treatment, for example varicose laser therapy, has been completed with everything included, the doctor sends the completed billing forms to MICADO, which checks the case and invoices it to the relevant health insurance company. Once the payment has been made by the health insurance company, the case reimbursement (minus the processing fee) is forwarded to the physician's specified account.

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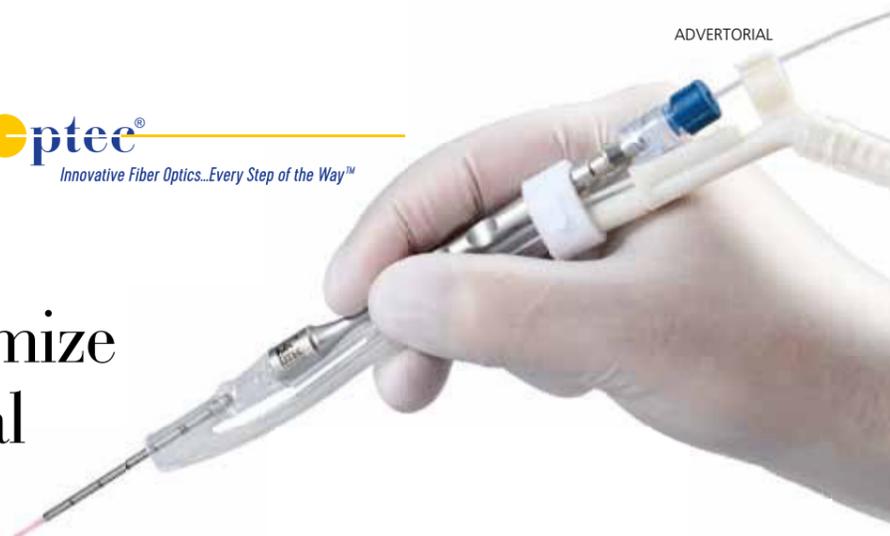
Matthias Heilmann studied business administration (BWL) at the University of Hamburg and went through different leading positions in Controlling, Budget Negotiating, and Contract Strategy in administration departments at hospitals, business insurances, and health insurance regional offices (Landesverband). Before he started in 2007 at MICADO, he was Head of Contract and Supply Management Department at DRÄGER & HANSE BKK (company health insurance fund). Matthias Heilmann is also since 2009 CEO at GVN - GesundheitsVerbund Nord GmbH (Health Federation North).



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Customize Optical Fibers for Medical Laser Applications

Fiber optic components „off the shelf“? This all too often signifies a wrong approach for medical laser applications. The application areas are too diverse and the range of available lasers too large for standardized fibers to meet all requirements. For optical fibers and probes as well as permanently installed components, choosing customized optical fibers is recommended in almost every case. These are produced by specialized manufacturers and tailored precisely to the respective application and laser. Whether an excimer laser is intended to correct a cornea or a vascular laser is used to remove upsetting spider veins – custom-made fiber designs always signify that the appropriate solution is available from the light conductor to the design of the probe's tip.

Presently, for example, many users of medical lasers rely on individually designed and manufactured optical fiber solutions from CeramoOptec. The fiber optics specialist from Bonn offers high-quality optical fibers and probes for all types of laser applications under the MED. OEM label. From preform to fiber pulling, to the finished probe, all production steps are performed in-house at their facility in Livani / Latvia, which allows for maximum customization. Besides, customers benefit from more than 30 years of experience in optical fiber development. Specialized optical fibers with rectangular core geometries, which convert the energetically inhomogeneous Gauss beam of conventional medical lasers into homogeneous top-hat beams and thus ensure uniform irradiation of specific body areas are available, e.g. for applications in dermatology or phlebology. CeramoOptec is the first manufacturer to supply solarization-resistant optical fibers for excimer lasers in refractive surgery, operating



in the UV spectrum. These lasers reliably and evenly transmit UV light even in sustained use without darkening. Applications requiring optical fiber bundles, such as cataract surgery, are supported by end-fused fiber bundles, which allow for more efficient coupling and de-coupling of laser light.



All-optical fiber bundles and probes manufactured by CeramoOptec are suitable for applications in both contact and non-contact mode. They are tissue-friendly, cause almost no bleeding and enable high-precision laser guidance in all application settings. In addition to common probe types, such as spherical or conical end pieces, silver halogen fibers for optimized light transmission in the typical mid-infrared range with CO2 lasers are available. Necessary safety measures have always been taken into consideration in fiber optics: if the guide system of a laser has to be suited to frequent changes of direction, safety fiber designs can be integrated into our optical fibers. Two copper wires are inserted in the fiber jacket of these optical fibers. They can be connected to the electrical circuit of the laser system and trigger an automatic circuit break and system shutdown in case of a fiber rupture. This also sets new standards in operator and patient safety.

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