

Volume 13, 23 October 2013

Publisher: Igitur publishing

URL: <http://www.ijic.org>

Cite this as: Int J Integr Care 2013; Annual Conf Suppl; [URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-114728](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:nl:ui:10-1-114728)

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Preface

Welcome note ICIC13 organizing committee

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Since about 20 years we gather experience with programs to improve continuity of care and care coordination in Germany. From the beginning we were interested in developments abroad, to that time especially in the USA. But health programs can't be copied one to one; we have been adjusting care strategies for the European, the German context. In the German setting the focus was clearly on improving the quality of care and we expected for most programs also an improvement in efficiency. One important success factor for at least a number of new care programs in Germany was the fact, that physician teams including non-medical staff and hospitals were given a key role in the implementation of new care programs.

In integrated care, there are no simple solutions. That means that we are learning from our successes and our failures. Only in this way we will be able to continuously improve our care programs. In this process it is helpful to take a look at experiences and discussions which are taking place in other countries. Especially European countries are of interest, because our systems and values are more similar than in other health systems.

Sometimes our discussions are stuck in circling arguments and therefore it might be useful to take another perspective: every now and then we need to get out the door and take a look at what is going on outside our own health system. And by doing so we might get more insights in other systems, but also in our own health system. How are challenges being addressed in other countries? Which strategies of the providers and health insurance are promising? What can our politicians contribute to better health care?

In this sense, I wish us all fruitful discussions and new insights for our daily work!