

## How will healthcare change in the years to come?

# Outlooks



"We are facing a major transformation in the healthcare system. Medical services will be concentrated in far fewer locations than at present, and treatments will increasingly take place on an outpatient basis. All current developments and hospital reform plans point in this direction. There is no alternative because medical professionals – already in short supply – will continue to decline in numbers, and this is the only way to meet demands for quality healthcare. What is the point of a hospital that has no staff, or where the procedure that a patient needs is not routine? Centralisation may mean that people have to travel longer distances – especially those in rural areas – but it also has advantages for patients: expertise will be concentrated at those facilities that continue to operate, and the diagnosis and treatment of even rare diseases will become routine there.

The digitalisation of the health industry will also shape this transformation. Tired of having to repeat your medical history to every doctor you go to? That will no longer be necessary once the results of all your medical examinations and information about medications and previous illnesses are stored on your health insurance card or in an app. Having this data at their disposal will give patients a new autonomy. I believe that within the next five years our smartphones will inform us in advance about what we need to bring along when we go to hospital, guide us through all the required examinations during our stay, and receive and store the results afterwards. The expectation here is that medical professionals will know far more about patients in advance, thanks to digital medical records and other innovations – and this will leave more time for actual communication."

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