



Countryside in Baden-Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg, Germany

General overview

Baden-Württemberg is Germany's third-largest federal state. Located in south-west Germany, and covering a geographical area of 35.751 km (1), the state is shaped by varying landscapes. The population in Baden-Württemberg has been increasing steadily for some time; today, this growth is almost exclusively the result of immigration. The average age in the state is also rising; currently, around 11.1 million people live there (2). Since 1970, the number of over-65 year-olds living in Germany has risen sharply, the proportion of this age group having almost doubled since 1960. In 2018, the largest age-group comprised the 40–65-year-olds (3). Life expectancy at birth for males and females, respectively, is 79.8 years and 84.2 years (4). GDP per capita is € 50.982 (5).

The State Government of Baden-Württemberg wishes to ensure the best possible health and

medical care for the population. The Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration has introduced health guidelines, focusing on ensuring a patient-centered, regionally available, and well-networked health-care system and the continuous improvement thereof. In addition to inpatient, outpatient, psychiatric and long-term care, the state places great importance on prevention and health-promotion activities.

In 2018, the Forum for Health-care Location Baden-Württemberg was established with the aim of further improving health care. Within the Forum four ministries are working to this end, in collaboration with experts from hospitals, care facilities, research institutes and universities, as well as biotech, pharmaceutical and medical-technology companies in Baden-Württemberg.

Regional activities linked to the WHO European Programme of Work

The following activities are linked to the three core priorities of the European Programme of Work (EPW): (i) moving towards Universal

Health Coverage (UHC); (ii) promoting health and well-being; and (iii) protecting against health emergencies.



Moving towards UHC

The level of medical and long-term care provided by the health-care system in Baden-Württemberg is recognized as being high. At the same time, however, health care in the state must be further developed and strengthened for the future. Better cross-sectoral collaboration within the health-care system is essential if it is to be future oriented.

Baden-Württemberg is pursuing the goal of establishing a health-care system with fewer interfaces and less bureaucracy (6).

A necessary bundling of activities is taking place in the form of expanded cooperation, for example, between local health centres, medical-care associations, etc., in which medical and non-medical areas are involved. By facilitating links between preventive approaches and curative, medical and rehabilitative care, it would be possible to provide patients with comprehensive care from a single source.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Integration is, therefore, promoting primary-care centres. The health-care landscape is currently undergoing major changes and Baden-Württemberg would like to play an active role in shaping them. Up to now, people have turned primarily to their family doctors regarding health concerns. In the future, primary-care centres will also play a role in this regard. In these centres, people from a wide range of health-care professions work hand in hand under one roof. In this way, they offer citizens comprehensive, rapid care in connection with health-related matters. People are living longer and, thus, chronic diseases are increasing. Dealing with this phenomenon requires the cooperation of various disciplines.

Since the beginning of July 2022, 21 selected projects have been examining the prerequisites and conditions necessary to enable centres and networks working in this area to succeed. These projects will focus on different key areas.



Promoting health and well-being

There are various initiatives, strategies and actors in Baden-Württemberg aimed at enabling everyone to live in a health-promoting way. This includes designing health-promoting environments and improving cooperation among relevant stakeholders at both the state and the municipal levels. Examples of these initiatives are:

- *Quartier2030 – designing together*, a project promoting age- and generation-friendly neighbourhood-development processes (7);
- *Prevention networks against child poverty*, an initiative promoting integrated municipal strategies for preventing and combatting child poverty;
- the State initiative, *Growing up and living healthily in Baden-Württemberg*, which supports the development and implementation of integrated health strategies, while supporting the integration of health into an overall strategy for municipal development;
- the *State Committee for Health Promotion and Prevention*, a legally anchored committee, which focuses on state-wide strategies and programmes for health promotion and prevention and develops corresponding recommendations for promoting public health in Baden-Württemberg;
- *Foundation for Health Prevention Baden-Württemberg*, which supports health-promoting activities, for example, by funding projects, or through the dissemination of the discussion paper, “Developing and enabling a healthy community”;
- *Coordination Unit for Health Equity*, a competency centre aimed at promoting the health of vulnerable target groups, including people in living in difficult social situations.



Protecting against health emergencies

The crucial foundation of a resilient society is the way in which resilience, as a resource, is distributed among the population. The likelihood of individuals being able to develop coping strategies varies according to their socioeconomic, biographical and dispositional status. Vulnerable groups have a greater need for preventive and curative help compared to other population groups. Reaching vulnerable target groups is a cross-cutting social task and a key issue in relation to quality of care during any health emergency. Two aspects to be highlighted are: the availability of communication tools within the care system, which are manageable both for affected persons and professionals in stress situations; and the availability of helpful contact services for those affected and find themselves in acute psychosocial crisis situations without adequate help.

The corona pandemic highlighted the challenges related to the structure of the Public Health Service (ÖGD). ÖGD needs to be strengthened structurally to be able to fulfil its core statutory tasks and cope with future health crises.

Thus, one of the main goals of strengthening ÖGD is to significantly improve its crisis capacity (for example, for future pandemics or other public health emergencies) by ensuring stable structures and simplified processes.

The main focus of the staff-expansion concept is on developing resilient structures and advising and supporting other institutions (for example, inpatient facilities for older people, integration aid) to better prepare them for future health emergencies (8).

Actions linked to the EPW flagship initiatives

(The Mental Health Coalition; Empowerment through digital health; The European Immunization Agenda 2030; Healthy behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insights.)

Initiatives relative to the Mental Health Coalition

In the coming years, the focus will remain on the target group, comprising children and adolescents from families with addiction problems. Therefore,

the Ministry set up a working group, which has developed recommendations on collaborative action related to the target group.

Initiatives relative to empowerment through digital health

Empowerment through Digital Health is an important part of Baden-Württemberg's strategy for the digitalization of health and care. In the project, "Digital health literacy", a digital-health truck is used to come into contact with people in public areas and institutions and demonstrate

existing e-health applications and those expected in the future. The project, "Healthy and digital in rural areas" aims to develop suitable offers to help older people become independent in the use of the internet and digital-health options.

Initiatives relative to the European Immunization Agenda 2030

Baden-Württemberg has established a tool that offers all actors involved in COVID-19 vaccinations the possibility of setting up appointments for these vaccinations. People can search for an appointment at a nearby location for a specific COVID-19 vaccine. In addition,

Baden-Württemberg is currently participating in a project aimed at creating both the technical and legal bases for the trial implementation of a vaccination register and, as a second step, a vaccination information system.

Initiatives relative to healthy behaviours: incorporating behavioural and cultural insight

Initiatives are being taken at the behavioural level to promote physical activity, including the creation of a "physical-activity passport", which aims to support children's motoric development in a playful way. In addition, peer approaches to the promotion of health literacy among migrants that take cultural aspects into consideration are

being funded. The local project, "Health guides for migrants in Stuttgart" and the internationally renowned project, "Mind-Spring" (promotes refugee health, using a psychoeducative, peer-based, group-oriented approach) contribute to this endeavour.

Initiative specific to Baden-Württemberg

The Forum Health Care Location Baden-Württemberg was founded in 2018 to bring about a closer connection between the areas of research, health-care management and health care towards developing Baden-Württemberg as a top-level

health-care location. The Forum currently brings together more than 500 experts from hospitals and care facilities, research institutes and universities, as well as from biotech, pharmaceutical and medical technology companies in Baden-Württemberg. In

a strategic process, with the support of the State Government, all these actors wish to contribute to strengthening the health economy and further improve health care for people living in Baden-Württemberg. In two funding rounds, with a budget of €100 million, key topics (such as

personalized medicine, digitization, artificial intelligence, networking and telemedicine) have been selected for 60 innovative projects. The aim of these projects is to provide related benefits to the citizens directly, and to gain international recognition (9).

The three most important topics for collaboration within the Regions for Health Network

These are:

1. designing health-supportive environments
2. supporting primary-care centres
3. strengthening the Public Health Service.

Main partners and collaborators

These are:

Coordination Office for Equal Health Opportunities in Baden-Württemberg (10)

Community Network for Civic Engagement (11)

Digital Digitilization Strategy. LÄND (12)

Foundation for Health Prevention Baden-Württemberg (13)

Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs Baden-Württemberg (14)

Municipal health conferences (15)

Forum Health-care Location Baden-Württemberg (9)

Stakeholders National Health Conference (16).

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