



**GDK** Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Gesundheitsdirektorinnen und -direktoren  
**CDS** Conférence suisse des directrices et directeurs cantonaux de la santé  
**CDS** Conferenza svizzera delle direttrici e dei direttori cantonali della sanità

## Presentation

The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health was founded in 1919. It serves as a political coordination body for the health ministers of the twenty-six Cantons. Its aim is to promote cooperation among the Cantons and between these and the Confederation, and to ensure close cooperation with the important organisations in the health system. Representatives of Federal Offices and of the Principality of Liechtenstein are permanent guests at the meetings of the Conference. There are usually two plenary sessions per year and five or six Board meetings. The Board is comprised of ten cantonal ministers of health. The Board deals with minor issues and prepares the agenda for the plenary sessions. The Conference has at its disposal standing committees on coordination of highly specialized medical services, financing of health care, professional training, and chiropractic examinations. Since 1978, the Conference has had a permanent Central Secretariat, located in Berne. In terms of legal status and financing, the Conference and its Central Secretariat are supported by the Cantons.

The Conference issues legally binding norms in certain fields of education (chiropractic examinations; until 2005 the Universities for Applied Sciences in Health Care), as long as the Federal Government is not (yet) the competent authority. In all other cases, its decisions are merely considered as recommendations for the attention of its members and the Cantons. The Conference is also of importance as a forum for debate for the health ministers and as a discussion partner for the federal authorities and for many national associations and institutions.

Basically any question relating to health policy may be taken up by the Conference. It tries mainly to solve problems related to specific central services, major coordination problems, political topics of common interest to the Cantons, and the position of the Cantons in relation to the Confederation. Among its ongoing tasks, the Conference advocates the interests of the Cantons in the elaboration of federal laws, and also coordinates their implementation, in the fields of health insurance and healthcare financing, healthcare planning with special emphasis on hospitals, and the development of information systems. The Conference collaborates with the Federal Authorities in examining measures to promote the development of basic medical services. It also seeks the conclusion of an Intercantonal Agreement to set up mechanisms to concentrate some of the highly specialized medical services. With the entering into force of new Federal laws, one on vocational training on 1 January 2004 and one on the Universities for Applied Sciences on 5 October 2005, the responsibility for regulations in this field (except chiropractic and osteopathy) is being transferred to the Federal Government. Nevertheless, during a transition period, the Conference will continue to provide its know-how in the whole area of healthcare-related professional training. In future the Conference will involve itself heavily in the work of the national «Organisation of the Labour World» promoting professional training in health care.

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