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HIGH LEVEL OF QUALITY AND SAFETY AT ALL LEVELS OF CARE

We want to offer our patients an excellent level of care at all times – in all hospitals and outpatient facilities. This is facilitated by creating organizational and technical enablers and establishing effective management systems for medical quality and patient safety in our company that help us to continuously improve our services.

HOSPITALS AT ALL LEVELS OF CARE

Our hospitals offer the full spectrum of medical treatment ranging from preventive medicine through to highly complex procedures such as transplants. A total of approximately 30,492 beds are available across Germany for this purpose with 29,786 of these in our acute care hospitals and 566 in our post-acute care clinics.

Our hospitals treated around 5.5 million (2022: 5.5 million) patients in 2023. Of this total, 1.1 million people were treated as inpatients and 4.4 million (2022: 4.4 million.) as outpatients. The 86 Helios hospitals offer all levels of care. Our portfolio of hospitals offers standard care (up to 300 beds), main provider (around 300 – 700 beds) and six maximum care hospitals in Berlin-Buch, Wuppertal, Krefeld, Wiesbaden, Erfurt and Schwerin (over 700 beds).

HELIOS AMBULANT



Helios Ambulant (Helios Outpatient) is Germany's biggest provider of outpatient medicine. The spectrum of services offered extends from general medical care, through a large range of specialist medical services and radiological diagnostics, to running outpatient operating centers. In 2023, our 3,300 employees at 230 sites with a total of around 600 doctors in Germany provided medical services to more than two million patients. Helios Ambulant additionally delivers a large selection of digital and hybrid services such as video consultations.

Photo: Thomas Oberländer

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HELIOS AMBULANT



Helios operates outpatient care centers in urban settings, at local level close to its hospitals, and in rural areas not served by a Helios hospital. This strengthens access to healthcare close to home for people in these regions. In 2023, Helios Ambulant was integrated within the regional structure of Helios hospitals with four regions – North, South, West, and East. This structure is intended to facilitate and promote multidisciplinary exchange between Helios practices and hospitals.

The expansion of Helios Ambulant takes account of the policy trend accelerating in the direction of more outpatient treatment. An increasing number of clinical procedures such as minor operations can be provided by doctors at their offices without the need for a hospital stay. At the same time, Helios is promoting multidisciplinary healthcare provision in collaborations between outpatient doctors and their colleagues in hospitals. Patients are thereby able to avoid duplicate examinations and they have convenient access to outpatient and hospital-based healthcare services.

Employees at Helios Ambulant enjoy benefits such as weekly digital online training courses free of charge on subjects like health, wellness and mental health, the JobRad e-bike, and an employer supplement for passes to public transport systems in the form of the “Deutschlandticket”. Helios Ambulant is helmed by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Enrico Jensch.

ENSURING MEDICAL QUALITY

Quantifiably high medical quality is consistently the focus of medical care for our patients. We operate a comprehensive quality management system to ensure this objective is achieved.

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HOW WE HAVE PLACED THE DELIVERY OF HIGH-QUALITY MEDICAL CARE AT THE HEART OF OUR ORGANIZATION

Our quality management system is primarily controlled by our Central Service for Medicine together with other process owners. At corporate level, two Medical Consultants hold responsibility for all medical matters relating to inpatient care at Helios. They report directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Helios, who is also the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). The full-time Medical Consultants advise the Helios management team and the regional leadership on all medical issues relating to alignment and control of the hospitals, coordinate the improvement of workflows and medical processes, and further the development of multidisciplinary care models. They also support hospital management teams in the appointment of Chief Physicians. Two other Medical Consultants are responsible for Helios Ambulant.

A Quality Management Steering Group coordinates central control processes for medical quality management and patient safety measures on a quarterly basis. The Steering Group is made up of the CEO/CMO and the two Medical Consultants, the Patient Safety Officer (PSO), the Central Service for Medicine, and the head of the nursing expert group. The hospitals' medical management teams comprising the hospital manager, medical director and nursing manager also carry out a quarterly assessment of all reportable indicators together with the Medical Consultants. If hospitals report unusual values for quality indicators or notifications concerning patient safety cases, they are required to report to the Quality Management Steering Group. Measures are defined here for implementation within a one-year period. Such measures may include [peer reviews](#) at the hospital level or quality management measures at the corporate level.

Another important engine for quality is provided by the 30 Helios [expert groups](#) (German language only). Senior physicians in the various medical specialties meet here twice a year. They ensure that all the hospitals are up-to-date on research in their disciplines and that treatment processes are being used correctly. They discuss results from clinical studies and derive potential changes in treatment processes on this basis. They also discuss and decide on the introduction of standard processes, appropriate innovations, the selection of medical products, and communication or education campaigns targeted on employees or patients.

HOW WE SYSTEMATICALLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE

In 2008, the [Initiative Qualitätsmedizin](#) (IQM; Initiative Quality Medicine) was established in conjunction with other hospital operators. The initiative is intended to improve and drive forward the treatment quality and comparability of hospitals by applying the principle of **Measure – Publish – Improve**. At its 25th anniversary in 2023, IQM was the largest

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voluntary quality initiative in the German healthcare sector. It has some 500 member hospitals run by municipal, non-profit church-owned, private and university operators.

The Helios quality management system is based on three stages:



Measuring quality



Analyzing and publicizing quality



Improving quality

Every step of a patient's treatment in hospital is precisely documented for subsequent billing to health insurance companies. We use this routine data as a basis for measuring the quality of our medical treatments. The data show, for example, whether a patient's recovery has taken longer than expected or whether complications or death have occurred. On this basis, we can assess whether treatment proceeded normally or whether potentially mistakes were made.

We also use our routine data to measure the German Inpatient Quality Indicators (G-IQI) as defined by the IQM. There are more than 380 of these indicators with information on over 60 important medical conditions and treatments. In addition, we collect data for more than 1,000 other quality indicators at Helios. We have selected 46 (2022:47) key indicators from the G-IQI for the strategic management of our medical quality. Specific targets have been defined for these indicators and we review our achievement of them annually.



Analyzing and publishing quality

We publish our [quality results](#) (German language only) on our corporate website and on websites of our hospitals to foster continuous improvement and to avoid repeating mistakes. The data provide visibility concerning the performance of a given hospital by comparison with the national average, with other Helios hospitals, and with IQM member hospitals. In addition, each hospital and each department receives a monthly report on its medical treatment outcomes so that trends can be identified in their early stages and detailed analyses can be initiated as necessary. In the reporting year 2023, we achieved the target values of a total of 1,862 indicators (out of 2,099 achievable targets), corresponding to a proportion of 88.7% (2022: 87%).



Improving quality

If our hospitals fail to meet certain quality targets or if other irregularities become apparent, we carry out a detailed analysis of the relevant treatments and processes in order to identify any potential for improvement. The focus is on specific audit

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processes in the medical and nursing areas under a peer review process where cases are discussed by expert peers. A peer review involves specially trained doctors from our hospitals and from the IQM network who cooperate to investigate statistical anomalies. Findings are translated into concrete recommendations for action by the hospital with the goal of further improving treatment quality and patient safety. We performed a total of 22 peer reviews in 2023 (2022:11).



HELIOS QUALITY RESULTS FOR 2023

[Find out more](#) (German language only)

PREMIUM SAFETY FOR OUR PATIENTS

The safety of our patients is our top priority. Guaranteeing patient safety is one of the key due-diligence obligations of the management.

HOW WE ESTABLISH PATIENT SAFETY WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

The responsibility for the issue of patient safety is invested directly in our CMO/CEO. In addition, we have also established the role of Patient Safety Officer. Both functions are supported by the Central Services and medical expert groups. Helios is also a member of the [Aktionsbündnis Patientensicherheit](#) (APS, German Coalition for Patient Safety) (German language only) and incorporates this network's recommended actions as part of clinical risk management. APS incorporates representatives of healthcare professions, their associations and patient organizations to form a common platform directed toward continuously improving patient safety in Germany.

INDICATOR SETS FOR ASSESSING PATIENT SAFETY

Helios has developed its own system for regularly collecting data on the safety of patients being treated at our hospitals. It aims to analyze and rectify any weak points in the care we provide. The system combines the internationally established indicators ([Patient Safety Indicators, PSI](#)) with Helios' own indicators. They include, e. g. the number of medical instruments accidentally left in a patient's body after an operation, as well as wrong-side surgery, serious medication errors, and falls causing serious injury.

Our Group Incident Response Policy requires all Helios hospitals to record these indicators systematically and report them to a central location. We publish the figures for selected indicators on [our website](#) (German language only). This demonstrates our commitment to

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creating the greatest possible transparency in dealing with adverse incidents and treatment errors. In 2023, 81 (2022: 54) events were recorded for eight selected patient safety indicators.

A new set of patient safety indicators has been drawn up for 2024 to improve comparability with the indicators of other countries, make the definition of incidents more precise, and improve the traceability of indicators.

Further information about patient safety is provided in the [Key figures chapter](#).



PATIENT SAFETY INDICATOR SET

[Find out more](#) (German language only)

STRUCTURED ERROR MANAGEMENT

To err is human. But we believe it is critical for us to respond transparently when errors occur so that we learn how to avoid them in future. In order to minimize potential risks for patients during and after operations, we have been using mandatory checklists for all surgeries since 2009. An analysis is carried out for each confirmed treatment error at hospital level and at the level of central error management. At morbidity and mortality conferences held in our hospitals, cases with potential for improvement are discussed jointly by the treatment team and measures for improving are defined. We record critical incidents and near misses centrally, uniformly and anonymously through our digital Critical Incident Reporting System (CIRS). The system can be accessed digitally in all areas of a hospital, and serves primarily to protect both our patients and employees. We also use the information recorded in CIRS to reveal potential errors in processes and workflows and to derive measures for improvement. In 2023, a total of 955 (2022: 736) incidents were reported and they are being evaluated on a local level in the individual hospitals.

In 2023, we recorded a total of 840 (2022: 827) alleged medical errors. In 2023, an average of 0.7 (2022: 0.8) per 1,000 patients raised a (justified or unjustified) medical error claim against Helios hospitals. These allegations encompass, to varying degrees, all specializations and all stages of treatment, including preoperative information, diagnostics, surgery, therapy, and aftercare. Accordingly, we have once again achieved the goal we set ourselves of ensuring that medical error claims do not exceed one per 1,000 full inpatient treatments. Over the past three reporting years, an average medical error rate of around 29% for Germany as a whole was reported to the medical associations (proportion of allegations of treatment errors that were recognized as valid after a preliminary expert review). The rate at Helios in 2023 was 26% and consequently in line with the average.

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In line with our transparent approach to error management, Helios processes and settles its liability cases directly (98%) rather than handing them over to an insurer. Consequently, Helios carries out its own very detailed analyses of these cases. Any potential for improvement is derived from these analyses and the results are directly discussed with the affected person without delay.

STRICT HYGIENE STANDARDS

Strict compliance with hospital hygiene standards is essential in order to prevent infections within a clinical setting. We have established our own Group Hygiene Policy, which is based on the recommendations of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). It includes specific instructions for many diagnostic, nursing, and therapeutic processes at our hospitals and outpatient care centers. The employees receive regular training and checks relating to hygiene requirements from hospital hygienists and hygiene specialists on the ground. Helios also posts on its [website](#) (German language only) the frequency with which multiresistant and other significant disease pathogens occur in our hospitals.

ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP (ABS): INNOVATIVE ANTIBIOTIC MANAGEMENT

The intake and use of antibiotics is a central, widely discussed topic in the healthcare system and beyond. Inappropriate prescription and consumption of antibiotics can lead to patients having to remain in hospital longer than necessary. The Helios Infectious Disease expert group has established a program for managing and reporting on antibiotics. This is now used in all Helios hospitals. The aim is to use shared and widely disseminated knowledge to combat the growing risk of patients becoming infected with microbes resistant to antibiotics.

Since 2021, the Berlin Medical Association (ÄKB) has also offered certified [courses in Antibiotic Stewardship \(ABS\)](#) (German language only). They are in line with the ÄKB curriculum and are under the scientific leadership of Helios. ABS Officers can undergo further training to become ABS experts following successful participation in five course modules. The objective of the training program is to convey knowledge about rational anti-infective therapy for appropriate use of antibiotics in line with the indications. Our ABS experts raise the awareness of personnel for this topic in departments that maintain beds and are available to our employees as the first point of contact. Since 2022, [peer reviews](#) on infectious diseases/antibiotic stewardship have also been carried out in several Helios hospitals with abnormal levels of antibiotic consumption and/or increased mortality from specific infections. A total of four of these reviews took place in 2023.

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REGULAR PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS



Helios Service Monitor (Photo: Mareen Brünemann-Kaemper)

We aim to ensure that patients in our hospitals are not just healthy, but also satisfied when they leave our hospitals. Receiving their honest feedback during treatment and afterward is therefore important to us. On this basis, we are able to respond quickly to their individual perceptions during their hospital stay and bring about an improvement in care. So as to systematically record feedback, we have developed the Helios Service Monitor, which we use at all Helios hospitals. Employees at the hospitals survey our inpatients once a week to ask them about their overall satisfaction. Our goal is to respond to the patient feedback within 24 hours. The patient data are then processed anonymously. Each hospital can view its current daily, weekly, or monthly results individually. In addition, we evaluate the results of all Helios hospitals centrally once a month to establish a bigger picture on satisfaction and to identify the main areas of criticism. In 2023, 719,025 patients at hospitals in Germany were surveyed for their opinion. This figure is equivalent to 65% of the inpatients. Out of the people surveyed, 96% (2022: 96%) said that they were satisfied with their current hospital stay. Typical issues for criticism involved, for example, catering and housekeeping, or communication between the individual professional groups or specialized staff, respectively. Statistical anomalies are reviewed by local hospital management, which introduces measures for improvement as necessary.

96%

of patients surveyed were satisfied with their hospital stay.

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SUSTAINABLE FOOD SERVICE

Plant-based nutrition with less meat has lots of advantages and this is not simply true for the environment but also for people's health. Our goal is to continue to expand the quality of catering provided in the hospitals and to make it more sustainable.

Since 2023, a total of 21 new lunchtime meals have been provided for patients with statutory health insurance, and these dishes have a higher proportion of plant-based ingredients. The menu includes ten vegetarian/vegan meals and two dishes with reduced meat content. This has enabled us to once again reduce the meat and fish content in the food provided for this group of patients by 17% to the current overall level of 43%. We have also increased the number of plant-based meals on the menu for patients with private insurance. In addition, 25% of the meals for this patient group are made with organically grown ingredients.

In cooperation with our partner PlanetV, our Catering business unit also developed a range of vegetarian and vegan dishes for the Helios cafeterias in 2023. This enables us to offer employees and guests a meat-free alternative. Since the reporting year, the head chefs at the individual hospitals have been able to integrate this meal range into their planning and offer a vegan dish every day.

RESEARCH

Each year, numerous national and international studies are conducted in our hospitals and we support employees interested in research topics. They include resident physicians who wish to undertake a doctoral thesis or employees from other healthcare professions who are working towards a masters or doctoral degree. Excellent research management makes Helios an attractive option for medical personnel carrying out research and for employees in other professions. It also makes Helios an appealing company for job applicants.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

We also work closely on research projects with public and private partners and in this way make a contribution to the creation of new knowledge. Research projects are conducted at our hospitals which are in some cases publicly funded. Support for these may come from the innovation fund of the Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss (G-BA, Federal Joint Committee), from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), or from the ministries of individual federal states. The projects generally focus on the development of new forms of healthcare provision and on treatment pathways, in other words courses of medical treatment.

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Collaborative research projects with manufacturers concentrate on testing new technologies in clinical settings to assess their benefits.

Helios also works with the Robert Koch Institut (RKI) to provide data on severe acute respiratory infections (ICOSARI) and thereby monitor the occurrence of influenza and Covid-19 viruses in hospitals.

HELIOS HEALTH INSTITUTE (HHI): RELIABLE PARTNER FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Since 2021, all research-relevant activities carried out under the auspices of Helios have been consolidated in the Helios Health Institute (HHI). Since 2022, the HHI has been the central point of contact for all employees of Helios hospitals and its subsidiaries who want to conduct research. The Institute validates the study design to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements for research.

The applicable Helios Group Research Policy stipulates that in order to protect patients, every research project, including all necessary documents, must first be submitted to the HHI for assessment and review. The HHI reviews research projects with regard to regulatory and content-related methodological requirements, performs a legal review of the project contracts, and advises on data protection. This enables hospitals to ensure that scientific, ethical, and legal requirements are met and that the project complies with applicable guidelines or quality standards.

All researchers are required to provide evidence of their qualification to conduct clinical studies and to comply with the provisions of the Helios Group Research Policy. In self-initiated studies, full responsibility lies with the persons leading the study.



Helios performed a total of **300 studies** at its hospitals in 2023.

In 2023, a total of 300 (2022:337) studies were reviewed for Helios, most of which had the goal of improving treatment options for patients. The focuses of the clinical studies in our hospitals are on cardiovascular diseases, oncology, and research into the provision of care.

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2023 STUDIES BY DISEASE

| Number | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Cardiovascular | 64 | 69 |
| Neurology/psychology | 7 | 8 |
| Oncology ¹ /Hematology | 146 | 134 |
| Covid-19 | 11 | 8 |
| Orthopedics/spinal surgery | 17 | 11 |
| Anesthesia/pain | 5 | 5 |
| Other diseases | 87 | 65 |
| Total | 337 | 300 |

1: Cancer includes all organ cancers and hematologic (blood) cancers.

2023 STUDIES BY INITIATOR

| Number | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|------------|------------|
| Helios as initiator | 58 | 46 |
| Participation in university-led studies, publicly funded ² | 100 | 127 |
| Participation in university-led or publicly funded studies with industry support; trial drugs typically provided ³ | 54 | 29 |
| Industry-sponsored studies ⁴ | 125 | 98 |
| Total | 337 | 300 |

2: The majority of these studies are led by universities, usually with public research funding.

3: The majority of these studies are led by universities/professional associations, but are supported by pharmaceutical/medical device manufacturers, which usually extends to the provision of the pharmaceuticals/medical devices.

4: The majority of these studies are supported by the pharmaceutical industry; less than 20% of the sponsors are medical device manufacturers.

CLINICAL STUDIES: ACCORDING TO ETHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STANDARDS FOR GREATER PATIENT WELL-BEING

How effective are drugs? Is a medical product really effective? Clinical studies provide answers to these and other questions. They are the prerequisite for the approval of drugs, medical products, and other forms of treatment. Investigations into their efficacy and effectiveness are carried out under specified framework conditions. This enables any adverse effects to be identified at an early stage.

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Why does Helios conduct clinical studies?

By participating in studies of this nature, patients have the opportunity to benefit from treatment methods which are not, or not yet, available in day-to-day clinical practice. Helios also offers the opportunity in a number of hospitals to take part in clinical studies, and to benefit from treatment with innovative therapeutic approaches.

What ethical and scientific standards are clinical studies at Helios based on?

Conducting clinical studies is subject to strict requirements. These include the Helios Group Research Policy and numerous external guidelines, national regulatory requirements, the Declaration of Helsinki issued by the World Medical Association, and the requirements of Good Clinical Practice (GCP). The GCP is an international ethical and scientific standard for planning, conduct, documentation, and reporting of clinical studies on humans. Compliance with these standards fosters public trust that the rights, safety and well-being of study participants are being protected and that the data collected in the course of the clinical study are credible. The regular GCP training courses organized by the HHI are compulsory for medical and non-medical staff conducting central study reviews.

How is compliance with these standards monitored?

The conduct of studies is monitored by audits and by inspections carried out by national, higher and regulatory authorities. If there are any complaints, appropriate corrective actions are initiated by the hospital involved and reported to the inspecting authority. In 2023, no external inspections and audits were carried out at the HHI.

What prerequisites have to be complied with at the beginning of a study?

A prerequisite for any study to begin is a vote or review by an independent ethics committee established under state law. All clinical studies are reviewed subject to this legislation by independent experts who are responsible for the relevant German state (Bundesland) or the local state medical association (Landesärztekammer). In the case of study projects being conducted of Helios physicians with university affiliation, the ethics committee of the university involved is responsible for the review of the study, depending on each state's regulations. In experimental studies, researchers can carry out investigations in the laboratory, for example using tissue samples or blood material. These studies are also reviewed by an ethics committee. All studies using sample material from patients must be evaluated by the ethics committee.

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If patients are interested in participating in a clinical trial, they discuss all issues in advance with the responsible investigator. These discussions follow a guideline that includes study-specific patient information approved by the ethics committee, and a declaration of consent. Only after evaluation by the ethics committee, and in accordance with the Helios Group Research Policy, are investigators permitted to use the documents.

In 2023, a total of 300 new studies were conducted or reviewed by Helios. The majority of them had the goal of improving therapies for patients. The studies were initiated at 36 hospitals and 46 studies were conducted on the initiative of Helios employees. The focuses of the clinical studies were oncology, hematology, and cardiology.



RELATED LINKS

[Awards for medical quality 2023](#)

[ESG KPI Overview 2023](#)

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PROMOTING HEALTH, DEVELOPING POTENTIAL, EMBRACING DIVERSITY: OUR EMPLOYEES

As a team we are strong: The commitment of our workforce numbering some 78,000 employees has made Helios a growing, medically and economically successful hospital company over the past 30 years. We are building on this foundation by continuously working to create a positive corporate culture, respectful collaboration, and comprehensive development opportunities for all our employees.

ATTRACTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS: FOR THE WELL-BEING OF PATIENTS AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Every day and every night, our employees make sure that our patients receive excellent medical care and thoughtful attention. They are the reason that Helios is the leading provider of inpatient and outpatient medical care in Germany. That is why we are doing everything in our power to offer our employees a job that they can identify with and that motivates them to develop both individually and within their teams. Our focus is firmly on respectful collaboration as equals, attractive working conditions, and comprehensive advanced training opportunities at all career stages.



¹ Three employees stated "diverse"

² Residents in training and apprentices are employed on temporary contracts until the end of their training. We also engage employees on temporary contracts to meet short-term staffing needs and to cover absences of permanent staff.

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In addition to our workforce employed on a permanent basis, we also employed agency staff during the reporting period. This allows us to compensate for temporary shortfalls in nursing staff and doctors, and thereby to avoid the closure of wards due to staff shortages.

At the same time, we are facing enormous challenges in recruiting human resources, ranging from a shortage of skilled staff, to demographic change, and an aging society. These challenges require human resource management at Helios to focus on fields of action such as recruitment of skilled staff, training and development of Helios qualified employees, and proactively fostering staff loyalty.. We are seeking to present attractive jobs and offerings to attract potential candidates. This approach is intended to assist us in appealing to talented employees and securing their loyalty.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS GOVERN FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS AND PAY



83% of our workforce are governed by collective agreements.

Helios uses collective agreements to ensure more attractive working conditions, a high level of quality in care, and employee satisfaction. Working conditions are regulated in collective agreements for 83% of the 77,924 (2022: 76,255) people working at Helios in 2023.

Our Helios Group collective agreement for non-medical staff was first concluded in 2006. Since then, it has been continuously updated and refined, and it applies at 34 of our hospitals. A company-specific collective agreement covers a further 36 hospitals, while the collective agreement for the public sector (TVöD) is applicable at ten locations. A further seven Helios hospitals are governed by the employment contract guidelines of Caritas Germany. As far as medical staff are concerned, 62 hospitals are subject to the Group collective agreements TV Ärzte Helios and TV Ärzte Helios Rhön. In seven hospitals, there are individual company-specific collective agreements for doctors, and a further ten hospitals come under the collective agreement for the public sector (TVöD) drawn up by the Association of Local Authority Employers' Associations (Vereinigung der kommunalen Arbeitgeberverbände).

All of the collective agreements ensure equal pay, in other words the same pay for the same type of work, irrespective of gender. Under the collective agreements, Helios regularly engages in pay negotiations and these generally take place every two years. The Works Constitution Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz) also grants to works councils rights of co-determination and opportunities for exerting control. We pay market rates to those employees not covered by collective agreements.

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PROMISING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE HELIOS TRAINING PROGRAMS

Excellent patient care thrives on well-trained staff and young people who contribute new ideas to actively shape the working day. We continued to lay the foundations for this with our training programs in 2023:

- A total of 6,008 people completed a vocational training in 2023 (2022: 5,587) at Helios, with 4,387 (2022: 4,103) of these completing a nursing training.
- In terms of our nursing apprentices, we offered employment to 80% (2022: 85%) of our program graduates during the reporting period.
- Helios had a total of 893 (2022: 985) medical students in clinical traineeships, 1,000 (2022: 971) medical students in clinical internships and 4,528 (2022: 4,357) physicians in residencies.
- Helios offers development programs for assistant nursing directors and assistants for hospital management in order to fill nursing director and hospital management vacancies more independently of the general labor market.

Further information on our apprentices is provided in the [Key figures chapter](#).

6,008

apprentices and 84 students are in a dual study program in nursing, medicine, IT, and management

Helios provides training in a wide range of clinical settings. During the training period generally lasting three years, apprentices are paid under a collective agreement. Helios delivers training at a total of 36 company training centers or in collaboration with external training partners.

4,528

doctors in advanced training

Doctors rotate within a planned and structured course program for specialist training. They pass through all specialist areas and are supervised by doctors authorized to provide advanced training.

1,000

medical students in internships

Helios offers medical students high-quality training at a total of 58 teaching hospitals. Alongside their practical experience, students can also prepare for their exams using the Helios online library and the AMBOSS and UpToDate databases.

893

medical students in clinical traineeships (mandatory internship between the pre-clinical examination and the clinical internship year)

During the course of their clinical internships, medical students receive a comprehensive insight and are able to identify which specialist discipline they are most interested in.

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trainees in management, nursing management, controlling and finance, human resources, marketing and communication, procurement and logistics, and IT

Helios offers trainee programs in management, nursing management, controlling and finance, marketing and communication, procurement and logistics, and IT. Over a period of two years, university graduates find out all about hospitals of different sizes in various regions.

EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT IN AN ERA OF SHORTAGE OF SKILLED STAFF

Recruitment to vacant positions in some areas is particularly challenging in the medical and healthcare sector. Competition for nursing staff is strong, especially in metropolitan areas, and specialist settings such as intensive care medicine and **neonatal care**. The situation is reversed for doctors, and it is more difficult to recruit staff for vacancies at smaller hospitals in more rural areas. Helios has therefore developed a number of tools to counter the shortage of skilled staff. The medical sector is one area where we are building up structured talent pools for the position of chief physician. In view of

the challenges involved in the search for new employees, human resource marketing has gained increasing importance over recent years. HR Marketing works at the interface of marketing, HR management, and recruitment to continuously develop relevant offerings for potential new colleagues at Helios along their employee journey. In 2023, we were able to recruit 4,075 (2022: 3,100) new nurses. The national nursing recruitment campaign #EchtesLeben (“real life”, German language only) – launched by us in 2021 – contributed to this success.

Helios trains around 6,000 young people in approximately 50 company-owned training centers or as part of our collaborations with external training partners. This makes an important contribution to securing talented young people in skilled positions. Around 4,400 people received training in the field of nursing.

A total of 15% (2022: 15.1%) of our total workforce were recruited in the reporting year. Further data about our new recruitments is given in the [chapter Key figures](#).

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WELCOME AND INTEGRATION PROGRAMS FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSING PROFESSIONALS

Alongside training in-house staff and recruiting skilled workers in Germany, Helios also recruits trained nurses from the international labor market. We are guided by the criteria of the [Quality Seal Fair Recruitment Nursing in Germany](#) (German language only).

As a matter of principle, Helios does not recruit staff from countries that are themselves located where there is also a shortage of nurses according to the World Health Organization (WHO). When choosing countries to recruit from, a decisive factor for us is that the local professional qualifications must be recognized in Germany. In 2023, we succeeded in recruiting 1,475 international nurses.

Fast and positive integration of international skilled staff is crucial for achieving our goals of patient well-being and employee satisfaction. A comprehensive program has been put in place to achieve this.

INTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Offers before arrival

We provide digital integration and welcome offers even before arrival. These include a welcome course with subject-specific training and regular digital class meetings with representatives of the departments and the clinics' integration teams. Through providing targeted language training concepts, recruits can start language training for hospital operations and everyday life before their arrival.

Offerings upon arrival

- **Specialist language training and onboarding:** After their arrival in Germany, we accompany and support our new colleagues with additional specialist language courses and onboarding concepts.
- **Advisory offerings:** We give advice and support to new international employees when they arrive in Germany, during integration into their new workplace, and when dealing with government authorities.
- **Integration managers:** In addition, Helios has also trained employees to be integration managers. They are supported by practical instructors, mentors and learning buddies.
- **Cultural ambassadors:** to promote a culture of openness and understanding within the teams, 14 additional employees were trained to be cultural ambassadors in 2023.

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In 2023, Helios recruited more than 300 refugees, primarily in medical and nursing positions. As an employer, Helios is fundamentally committed to successful integration of refugees who are unable to return to their country or do not want to. Early integration of refugees into the daily life of hospitals enhances their chances of staying in Germany over the long term. We would like to make a contribution to this.

In 2023, our employees created a recipe book of cultures as a milestone for a sustainable, open society. The recipe book collects international and national recipes that are regularly swapped between members of our teams at Helios. This is a way for colleagues to get to know each other better and learn about other cultures and ways of life.



OUR OFFERING FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSES

[Find out more](#) (German language only)

INVESTING IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES

As well as training our own employees, we believe it is crucial to facilitate further development and qualification options for staff. This ensures the continued high quality of healthcare and continuously opens up perspectives and career opportunities for our personnel. In order to achieve this, we offer numerous opportunities for further training. These training options are coordinated centrally by the Helios Academy, but many of these opportunities are planned and implemented on a regional basis to ensure a local offer tailored to the target group. Hospitals are expected to reinvest up to 0.4% of their annual revenue in the training and professional development of their employees each year. In 2023, the actual amount invested by our hospitals in continuing education and professional development averaged 0.43% (2022: 0.31%). This is equivalent to a total of €29.47 million. Furthermore, Helios invested €534,000 in innovative career training projects as part of the qualification initiative Kick-off Training. In order to assess our training and development measures, our managers are required to offer a development meeting to each of their employees at least once a year.

DIGITAL FORMATS FOR EASY ACCESS TO LEARNING OFFERS

We primarily use digital formats in all areas of training and career development. Over the course of 2023, we registered a total of 984,115 log-ins on the Helios “Lernbar” learning management platform. The trend toward digital learning is also continuing in mandatory instruction sessions for our employees, for example on the subjects of data security and brand protection. To enable continuous knowledge management in addition to the

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About **100 e-learning seminars** are available via the **Helios "Lernbar"**.



Approximately **5,000 professional development seminars** were offered in 2023.

training courses, the Helios central library provides access to some 33,000 e-books and more than 1,300 different journals online. In addition, all employees have access to the UpToDate, PubMed, AMBOSS and "Rote Liste" databases. Each year, all employees are able to undertake online training relating to two Helios knowledge goals. Two new topics are defined on an annual basis. In 2023, "Child protection at Helios" and "We live diversity" were defined as the knowledge goals for employees.

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: THE HELIOS ACADEMY FOR EXECUTIVES

Managers at Helios have a high level of responsibility. In their function as role models, they practice honest, transparent, and dependable social interaction with their employees. This also entails explaining decisions, dealing openly with errors and learning from them, and adopting a constructive approach to the resolution of conflicts. The Helios Academy for Executives launched in 2021 is intended to support this target group in their work by offering orientation and expanding competencies as necessary. The focus is on the three areas of corporate culture, leadership culture, and specialized expertise. In 2023, more than 4,000 managers took up to 51 training offers provided by the academy for executives.

FOR LONG-TERM LOYAL COOPERATION: STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

Our aim is to pursue long-term cooperation with our employees. This is because well-coordinated teams and knowledge retention within the company make a significant contribution to better care for our patients. Our employee retention measures and programs also exerted an impact in 2023. On average, employees stay at Helios for 9.9 (2022: 10.1 years) years.

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REDUCING TURNOVER

In order to prevent employees leaving the company after a short period of time, we standardized the induction process for new employees in 2020. We also further developed and digitalized onboarding processes. Annual feedback meetings between employees and their supervisors have been offered as standard at Helios for many years now. The rate¹ of employee terminations in 2023 was 7.7%, which is slightly down on the previous year (2022: 8.0%).

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR ENHANCED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

There are additional employee offerings at Helios that increase the satisfaction of our employees. These are in turn intended to reinforce the loyalty of employees to the company:

- **Helios Corporate Benefit Program:** This offers benefits such as exclusive discounts and deals with cooperating partners, as well as a diverse range of sports and nutrition courses.
- **Helios PlusCard:** In addition, our employees receive the Helios PlusCard, a supplementary private hospital insurance policy for Helios employees.
- **Support in caring for relatives:** We support our employees in caring for their relatives by providing them with the expertise of a contractual partner.
- **JobRad e-bikes:** In 2022, Helios concluded a master agreement with JobRad for the provision of e-bikes. Some hospitals also offer their employees Jobticket passes for public transit systems (ÖPNV).

¹: Here, the calculation of voluntary employee resignations was changed or harmonized with that of the other Fresenius entities. We are now excluding termination contracts without severance pay. The employee termination rate is based on the new calculation (excluding termination contracts without severance pay): 2020: 6.0%, 2021: 6.8%, and 2022: 8.0%..

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Consulting our employees: Helios Puls



In autumn 2023, we conducted a company-wide employee survey entitled Helios Puls for the second time. After the major initial survey launched in 2022, the 2023 survey was intended as an intermediate survey, which demonstrated that we are on the right track with the measures we adopted. A positive trend was evident in all professional groups with respect to commitment, satisfaction values, and willingness to pass on a recommendation for Helios as an employer and as a healthcare provider.

A total of 12,880 people took part in the survey.

A response rate of 19% (2022: 21%) means that the survey findings can therefore be considered representative at the Group level.

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORK ENVIRONMENT

Above all for employees who work shifts, it is often a major challenge to balance work with family life and childcare. Helios has therefore promoted a good work-life balance for many years. Employees often struggle with a lack of options for childcare during their working hours. In order to support these employees, we offer childcare at 34 of our locations throughout Germany.

Additionally, we promote work-life balance with personalized models for working hours, part-time work, and job sharing. In 2023, a total of 3,672 (2022: 5,040) of our employees exercised their legal right to parental leave, 3,067 of whom were women and 605 men. We agreed on a monthly childcare allowance of up to €150 in our Group-specific collective agreement back in 2007. Employees can claim this supplement if they wish to return from parental leave earlier. They can also attend training courses during their parental leave to keep up to date with the latest developments in their field for when they return to work.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION IN THE COMPANY AND DAY-TO-DAY HOSPITAL OPERATIONS

As a responsible employer, we reinforce equal opportunities and inclusion. We have a strict prohibition on discrimination and unequal treatment. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of skin color, ethnic origin, political views, faith, age, gender or gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, cultural background, sexual orientation, physical, mental or psychological condition, appearance or other personal characteristics. We do not tolerate insults, humiliation, or harassment in our daily work. This applies to the interactions between employees during the ordinary working day, and to the behavior of third parties when dealing with our employees. If incidents of discrimination or unequal treatment occur, they are dealt with by the relevant hospital management together with the human resource managers and, depending on the severity of the case, passed on to the regional or central offices.

Our [Helios Compliance Code](#) (German language only) stipulates that all employees are able to report any misconduct they observe. In the first instance, the primary point of contact for such reports is the employee's line manager, although any other manager at the site may also be contacted. The Helios ombudsperson, whose contact details can be found on the company intranet, is a neutral and independent advocate that employees can contact. More details on this are provided in the chapter Responsible Corporate Governance.

MANAGING DIVERSITY AT HELIOS

The Helios Chief Human Resources Officer has overall responsibility for diversity. The hospital management teams are responsible for implementing diversity concepts at local level. In 2021, Helios Germany signed the Diversity Charter – for diversity in the world of work – which is managed by the employer initiative Charta der Vielfalt e. V.

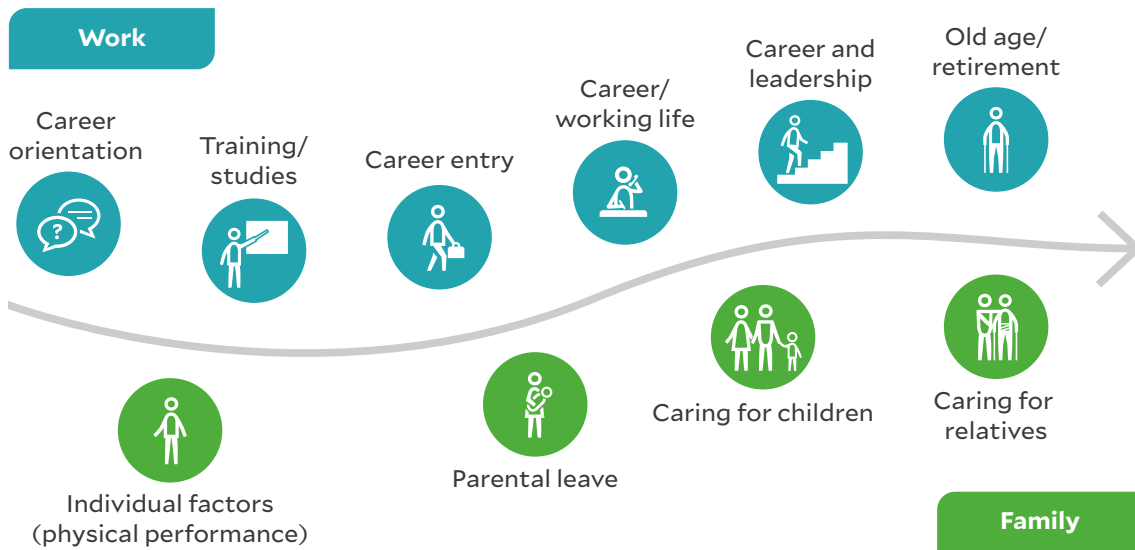
At the same time, a dedicated diversity working group was set up to address strategic development and implement overarching measures. The working group translates new key topics into concrete measures at monthly meetings. More than 70 employees from hospitals are active in the Helios network. They give concrete form to implementation strategies and initiate new projects to promote a diverse work culture. In 2023, diversity was a topic for our company-wide knowledge goal. The digital training We Live Diversity served to focus deliberately on the internal dimension, and we highlighted how diversity is practiced in the workplace every day and how it enriches cooperation. Since 2022, diversity has been established as a subject at all Helios training centers.

In 2023, activities concentrated on the diversity dimensions of religion and age. One project was workplace design taking life stage into account. The aim of the project was

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to strengthen a human resources policy that optimally supports employees in all life stages from career orientation, training, and qualification to retirement. Various offers were specified here, for example support in getting the work-life balance right between family and career, and combining work with caring for relatives, needs-based working time models, and offers for integration and inclusion of employees with special needs.

PHASES OF LIFE AT WORK AND IN THE FAMILY



REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSION

Furthermore, Helios has pursued the goal for many years now of increasing the proportion of women in management positions – irrespective of statutory requirements. In 2023, a total of 31% (2022: 31%) of our management positions were held by women.

Collective and local agreements ensure that employees receive equal pay for the same work, irrespective of gender. In addition, these agreements state that the same benefits should be available to all employees.

We offer three management development programs for doctors throughout the company. The programs are aimed at new or aspiring managers in medicine, doctors in middle management, and experienced doctors who are aiming for a position in top management (chief physicians). The proportion of women in the program is on average 40%.

In 2023, we launched the social media campaign entitled Women in Management with the objective of stimulating interest in a more ambitious career path and to encourage women to work towards a leadership position in medicine.

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31% of management positions are held by **women**.

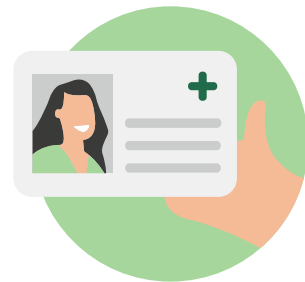
In 2020, we concluded a Group Inclusion Agreement applicable throughout the Group with the Group Representative Council for Employees with Disabilities. It promotes the integration of people with disabilities, including severe disabilities, as well as employees at risk of disabilities. The agreement also aims to maintain equal opportunities and prevent the discrimination and social exclusion of severely disabled employees.

HEALTH MANAGEMENT

We want to protect the health of our employees and actively promote it at the same time. That's why we use comprehensive measures to ensure that our employees are operating in a safe workplace at all times and they can organize their life in a healthy way.

WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION AT OUR SITES

We offer our employees measures and services to promote workplace health which are provided at individual Helios locations. They include collaboration with gyms, back exercise courses, yoga courses, quit-smoking courses, and team events such as company fun runs. The programs also cover topics such as healthy eating, relaxation techniques, and healthy sleep. The Helios PlusCard is a supplementary private hospital insurance policy that is also part of the workplace health support service.



The **Helios PlusCard** provides supplementary hospital insurance for our employees.



HEALTH MANAGEMENT

[Find out more](#) (German language only)

OUR MEASURES FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE AT HELIOS

Our objective is to provide our employees with a safe and healthy work environment. We aim to consistently reduce workplace accidents and near misses. In 2023, the areas of occupational safety, fire safety, waste management, and hazardous materials were transferred to a dedicated entity, Helios HSE GmbH Health, Safety & Environment (HSE). This company is responsible for all Helios hospitals and their subsidiaries.

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Our employees from occupational safety carry out regular occupational safety inspections at operational facilities. They are also responsible for training courses dealing with potential hazards and hazard hotspots. The aim is to continuously improve occupational safety and health protection.

Established processes exist for managing workplace reintegration. Employees returning to work after a long period of absence are supported by experts from various departments with the goal of reestablishing their capacity to work in line with their individual capabilities. The aim is to make it easier for employees to return to their workplace.

Managers have risk assessments for their work areas. These assessments are the central tool for occupational safety. They assist in identifying potential hazards at an early stage and provide support for deriving measures and appropriate effectiveness controls. In addition, risk assessments raise the profile of occupational safety for everyone involved in the course of their daily work. Reviews are performed every two years and, as necessary, on an ad-hoc basis in order to check that the risk assessments are still up-to-date.



HELIOS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTHCARE

[Find out more](#) (German language only)

Updates are supplemented by the responsible process owners in the specialized and function departments. They alert the responsible departments to potential deficits and correct any deficiencies in cooperation with the occupational safety specialist.

THREE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT MEASURES FOR A SAFE WORKPLACE

Hygiene requirements and personal protective equipment

Compliance with our stringent hygiene requirements is a key measure for protecting our medical staff. We educate our employees and support them in the proper use of disinfectants. We also carefully select skin protection products and provide skin protection plans. Helios internal specialists provide support and advice in choosing the correct personal protection equipment (PPE) for the occupational safety and health of our employees.

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Fire safety

An established Helios fire safety register is used to record necessary fire safety measures in the operational facilities, eliminate deficiencies, and document regular updates. The focus here is always on minimizing the risk of potential damaging events. Fresenius Internal Audit also conducts regular audits here, and findings contribute to a continuous improvement process. Fresenius Internal Audit is therefore an important component in the process of continuous quality review.

Data recording and monitoring

The Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) was introduced in 2023, prior to launching a system for central recording of work and commute-related accidents at Helios hospitals. LTIFR is an internal indicator used to steer the company's safety culture. The aim of recording and evaluating this information is to reduce accidents. A further objective is to identify and rectify deficits at an early stage.



RELATED LINKS

[Employer certifications and awards in 2023](#)

[Interactive indicator tool](#)

[ESG KPI Overview 2023](#)