



Hermann Gröhe
Federal Minister
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Dear participants,

„Freedom is not the option to act arbitrarily, but the capability to act reasonably.“ This is a quote by Rudolf Virchow, a physician and researcher who pursued a scientific approach of medicine. Today he is considered to be one of the forefathers of traditional medicine.

In my view, Virchow's quote marvellously matches the World Congress Integrative Medicine & Health. It is the therapeutic freedom of doctors and thus a therapy that is tailored to the specific needs of individual patients which both contribute to providing the best possible treatment for people in the case of illness. Against this background, it is not a taboo to think outside the box: More and more often, methods of complementary medicine are also applied to support the success of a treatment by conventional medicine.

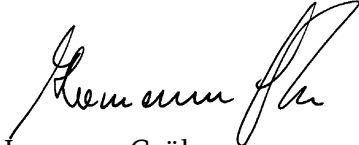
In addition, methods of alternative medicine are widely accepted by the population at large: Surveys have shown that many people in Germany make regular use of natural medicine and alternative medicine.

Even the statutory health insurance funds increasingly acknowledge the approach of complementary medicine. As the example of acupuncture has shown, the treatment methods outside classical conventional medicine may essentially contribute to a quality-oriented, cost-competitive and at the same time humane health care. In 2006 acupuncture was included in the catalogue of benefits and services of the statutory health insurance, after reliable studies confirmed its usefulness in certain fields of treatment.

One of the envisaged goals of your World Congress Integrative Medicine & Health is to further improve holistic patient care by integrating methods of complementary medicine. The international group of participants provides the ideal prerequisites for an extensive and certainly insightful exchange on the current state of integrative medicine - remaining true to

the spirit of Virchow who held the view that there was nothing more practical than a good theory.

I wish your conference to yield good results!



Hermann Gröhe