

Follow-up audit of the implementation of key recommendations

Federal Office of Public Health

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted a follow-up audit on the implementation of its main recommendations at the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH). The four recommendations stem from the SFAO's audit, published in 2022, on the settlement procedure for COVID-19 testing costs.¹ The Confederation assumed costs of CHF 3 billion for over 23 million COVID-19 tests between 2020 and 2022. The recommendations concerned measures to combat improper settlements and reduce testing costs.

The FOPH is struggling with the consequences of improper settlements

Although the Confederation stopped covering the costs of COVID-19 tests at the end of 2022, the FOPH continues to struggle with the consequences of improper settlements. In October 2022, the health insurance association santésuisse estimated the potential for abuse at CHF 20 million. In a corresponding concept, the FOPH describes how data analysis is used to identify service providers whose settlements show signs of abuse. The concept explains how the FOPH reclaims improperly obtained tax money and prevents further unjustified payments. By the time of the audit, the FOPH had been able to reclaim CHF 2 million.

In the SFAO's view, the two recommendations regarding the establishment of an abuse concept and the request to insurers to provide their policyholders with settlement statements for COVID-19 tests have been implemented. Two further recommendations were aimed at providing more transparent information concerning the test location and at reducing the testing costs. With regard to these recommendations, the SFAO agrees with the FOPH's assessment that they are now obsolete as the Confederation has ceased to assume the costs. The SFAO encourages the FOPH to adapt the abuse concept at regular intervals based on new data analyses and findings from requests for repayment. In addition, the SFAO recommends that the FOPH consider the lessons learned from the cases of abuse when assuming costs in the future.

Original text in German

¹ "COVID-19: Audit of the settlement procedure for testing costs" (audit mandate 22627), is available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch)