

Press Release



Belgian healthcare drops further in European health consumer ranking

Brussels, 13th November 2008

Belgium has dropped to 12th place among healthcare systems in Europe, according to the 2008 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI). Previously a clear winner of the waiting times category, Belgium has lost ground due to the waiting times for MRI scans. At today's launch of the annual survey of EU healthcare, the 2008 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI), the Belgian healthcare system was ranked 12th out of 31 countries. The Netherlands lead the rankings with a score of 839 points, followed by Denmark (Diabetes Index winner in 2008), Austria (EHCI winner in 2007), Luxemburg and Sweden.

In six categories, covering 34 performance indicators, Belgium scores 661 points from a potential 1,000. However, poor medical outcomes, high antibiotic-resistance levels, limited success at reducing the rate of suicides and poor management of diabetes patients plus the delays in pricing and reimbursement for novel drugs are some of the reasons why Belgium is now falling behind.

"Belgium is still remarkably slow at offering its healthcare consumers access to new medicines. This systematic delay, often larger than a year, seems to affect the quality of care and has an impact on the survival of Belgian patients," said Dr. Arne Björnberg, Research Director for the Euro Health Consumer Index. "It is also remarkable that the reporting of Belgian healthcare data to international bodies lags behind by almost a decade."

What more could be done in Belgium?

"Given the poor outcomes, Belgian patients could really benefit from a provider catalogue with quality ranking!" stated the president of the Health Consumer Powerhouse, Mr. Johan Hjertqvist, reviewing the Index outcomes for Belgium. He added: "But we recognise that Belgium has followed our recommendation from last year and improved the involvement of the patients in the decision making process."

About the Index

The Euro Health Consumer Index is the annual ranking of national European healthcare systems across six key areas: Patient rights and information, e-Health, Waiting time for treatment, Outcomes, Range and reach of services provided and Pharmaceuticals. 31 countries are covered. First published in 2005, the EHCI is sourced from public statistics and independent research. The producer is the analysis and information organisation Health Consumer Powerhouse. As with all other HCP Indexes, the organisation takes a consumer-centred position.

For more information and the explanatory report:

http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/archives/cat_media_room.html

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com

Health Consumer Powerhouse contact: Ms Kajsa Wilhelmsson, +32 (0) 496-23 55 30.

Office Brussels: Rue Fossé aux Loups 34, B - 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Phone: +32 (0) 2 218 73 93 Fax: + 32 (0) 2 218 73 84

media@healthpowerhouse.com www.healthpowerhouse.com