

Press Release



The Netherlands top 2008 European healthcare consumer ranking; Estonia still provides best value for money

Brussels, 13th of November 2008

The Netherlands win the 2008 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) with the biggest margin since this 31 country ranking started in 2005. Besides the Dutch system there is a small group of strong performers: Denmark, Austria and Luxembourg. The Danish, Hungarian, Luxembourg, Cypriot, French and Portuguese performances contrast sharply with the 2007 index, the first three scoring much better and the last three notably worse.

General European healthcare trends after 4 years of ranking experience:

There is a downward trend for countries like Belgium, France and Sweden. These healthcare systems do not keep up with the improvement rate one can find in countries like Denmark, Ireland, Czech Republic and Hungary. The Netherlands is the truly stable top performer in all our indexes and we find that its healthcare system is Europe's best! The Netherlands have started early on the work on patient empowerment which now clearly pays off in all areas.

The conclusion is that when working to improve healthcare it is important to recognize the link between medical outcomes and the easiness of access to services and quality information for patients. Good healthcare management and reform is not only a matter of money.

Johan Hjertqvist, president of Health Consumer Powerhouse (HCP), states: "More present diseases must be diagnosed early and there should be active follow-up to prevent further complications. Greater transparency is also needed: How can a healthcare system be guided and directed without records of what it actually delivers?"

In contrast, Hjertqvist highlighted the existence of beacons of potential, such as Estonia, which demonstrates how to deliver quality performance with relatively low levels of expenditure. He also noted that: "In the past four years, The Netherlands have been in the top three among European healthcare systems in all our general healthcare indexes. It is justified to say that the Dutch have the best healthcare system in Europe. When the Obama healthcare policy team looks at Europe for inspiration it seems to be the right system to study."

EURO HEALTH CONSUMER INDEX 2008 AT A GLANCE:

Rank	Country	Change	Rank	Country	Change	Rank	Country	Change
1	Netherlands	+1	11	Estonia	+1	22	Slovakia	+1
2	Denmark	+7	12	Belgium	-2	23	Malta	-3
3	Austria	-2	13	UK	+4	24	Lithuania	+2
4	Luxembourg	+7	14	Hungary	+10	25	Poland	+2
5	Sweden	+1	15	Ireland	+1	26	Portugal	-7
6	Germany	-1	16	Czech Republic	-1	27	Romania	-2
				Italy	+2			
7	Switzerland	-3	18	Spain	-4	28	Bulgaria	-
8	Norway	-1	19	Greece	+3	29	Croatia	N/A
9	Finland	-1	20	Slovenia	+1	30	FYROM	N/A
10	France	-7	21	Cyprus	-8	31	Latvia	-2

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

Press Release



Weak performers

Once again, the Central and Eastern European countries make up the bulk of the low-end performers, although with the notable exception of Hungary; there are Western countries, such as Portugal, Malta or Cyprus, who struggle to deliver adequate levels of care and play in the losers league. The main issue is still outcomes. "Education of both patients and general public would provide a marked improvement in care and outcomes. All countries are still in need of reform", observed Hjertqvist when noticing the following revealing statistics:

- In 2007, close to 55 percent of the countries scored green on access to family doctor the same day while in 2008 just 45 percent achieve full score. The same tendency is noticeable regarding cancer treatment within three weeks.
- In the majority of European healthcare systems – some even in Western Europe – under-the-table-payment to the doctor is a reality!

Index performance criteria

The EHCI 2008 groups 34 indicators of quality into six categories: Patient rights and information, e-Health, Waiting time for treatment, Outcomes, Range and reach of services provided and Pharmaceuticals. Each sub-discipline is weighted for importance to provide the overall Index score. The individual category leaders were as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| ▪ <u>Patient rights and information:</u> | Denmark |
| ▪ <u>e-Health:</u> | Denmark |
| ▪ <u>Waiting time for treatment:</u> | Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland |
| ▪ <u>Outcomes:</u> | Sweden |
| ▪ <u>Range and reach of services provided:</u> | Netherlands |
| ▪ <u>Pharmaceuticals:</u> | Austria |

About the EHCI

The Euro Health Consumer Index is the annual ranking of national European healthcare systems. 31 countries are covered this year. 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