

Press Release



Belgium performs slightly better but still not among the top 10 in EU annual healthcare index

Brussels, September 28, 2009

Belgium climbed one position among the European healthcare systems when the 2009 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) was presented today in Brussels. The annual survey of EU healthcare ranked Belgium 11th out of 33 countries. The Netherlands win for the second year with a record 863 points, followed by Denmark (819), last year's runner-up, newcomer Iceland (811) and Austria (795).

Belgium scores 732 points from a potential 1,000 and generally performs rather well at waiting times or services provided but quite poorly when it comes to e-Health. Belgium was ranked behind Luxembourg and Norway but ahead of countries such as Finland and Ireland.

"Belgians do have excellent access to healthcare services, and are one of the nations in Europe where patients have real freedom of choice where to seek care", states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. "However, medical results are not good enough to propel Belgium into the top 10 of Europe".

This year's measurement indicates that the top performers in European healthcare start using healthcare information and choice to engage patients in the decision-making building a pressure from below for improvement. At the lower end of the ranking you find many countries stuck to old style healthcare, filled with hierarchies and lack of transparency. This gap challenges EU principles of equality and solidarity.

About the Index

The EHCI has become a measurement standard for European healthcare. It ranks 33 national European health care systems across 38 indicators, covering six areas that are key to the health consumer: Patients' rights and information, e-Health, Waiting times for treatment, Treatment outcomes, Range and reach of services provided and Access to medication. The Index is compiled from a combination of public statistics, patient polls and independent research conducted by the founders, Brussels-based think tank Health Consumer Powerhouse. The EHCI 2009 takes a consumer centred position and works under the auspices of the Swedish EU Presidency. The e-Health subcategory is developed in co-operation with the European Commission - DG Information Society and Media.

For more information and the explanatory report:

http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=54

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