

Danish patients are the most empowered in Europe

Brussels, 31st of March 2009

Denmark has the most empowered patients around Europe. So says the report "Empowerment of the European Patient - Options and Implications", published today in Brussels. The top ranked countries are a good mix of Western and Central - Eastern European countries. The report finds that money is not the only thing that matters when it comes to patient empowerment – the issue is about will and perception of whom the healthcare system aims to serve!

The report groups 18 indicators of empowerment into four categories: Patients' rights, Information, Health Technology Assessment (HTA) and Financial incentives. Each sub-discipline is weighted for importance to provide the overall score of max 1000 points.

The individual category leaders are as follows:

Patients' rights: **Switzerland**

Information: **Denmark**

Health Technology Assessment (HTA): **Denmark** and the **UK**

Financial incentives: **Belgium, Germany** and **Switzerland**

Who gets the top grade and why?

1. Denmark, 2. Germany, 3. Finland and Switzerland, 5. Netherlands, 6. France, 7. Hungary and Norway, 9. Slovenia

In the top-ranked countries, policy makers seem to have realized that the healthcare system is for the patients and does not only serve to guarantee a healthy workforce able to pay taxes and do its duty. Good healthcare is dependent on the active participation of the patients. These systems work to involve patients offering financial incentives, power over information and patient rights leading to active choices.

Those mere average countries – how to step up?

10. Austria and Slovakia, 12. Estonia, 13. Belgium, 14. Lithuania, 15. Sweden, 16. Luxemburg

Today's report makes clear that many European countries still need to open up for patients to make quality choices. Empowerment comes by financial incentives like co-payment and free choice among doctors and hospitals. Every country should have a provider catalogue with quality ranking. Such tools enable patients to become active partners in healthcare.

What should be done in the countries failing in the ranking?

17. United Kingdom, 18. Italy, 19. Czech Republic, 20. Ireland, 21. Cyprus, 22. Greece, 23. Malta, 24. Spain, 25. Poland, 26. Croatia, 27. Latvia, 28. FYROM, 29. Portugal, 30. Romania, 31. Bulgaria

Better user information has to be the initial step towards patient empowerment. The first issue is fostering patient literacy; other tools are essential when allowing patients to become participants in

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



care. Patient co-payment often goes hand in hand with user-friendliness, as already indicated by the annual Euro Health Consumer Index. Screening programs for common diseases as well as opening the Health Technology Assessment procedures for patient review prove to be important.

Our recommendations for policy improvement country by country:

Austria, 10th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Belgium, 13th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Bulgaria, 31st place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Croatia, 26th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Cyprus, 21st place: Citizens today expect to be supplied with interactive healthcare and pharmaceutical information 24/7!

Czech Republic, 19th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Denmark, 1st place: It is time for Denmark to lift the suspension of the law that gives the Danes the right to fully choose among providers in Denmark; further on, the right to cross-border care should be recognized.

Finland, 3rd place: Free choice among healthcare providers should be implemented ASAP!

France, 6th place: Citizens today expect to be supplied with interactive healthcare and pharmaceutical information 24/7!

FYROM, 28th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Germany, 2nd place: German patients need to get understandable information about the medicines they are using, from more sources than their doctor or pharmacist.

Greece, 22nd place: There is a clear need for open financial incentives within the healthcare sector to stimulate more patient involvement!

Hungary, 7th place: There is a clear need for open financial incentives within the healthcare sector to stimulate more patient involvement!

Ireland, 20th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Italy, 18th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Latvia, 27th place: With a healthcare system performing as poorly as the Latvian one the need for patients' rights is highly evident!

Lithuania, 14th place: There is a clear need for financial incentives within the healthcare sector to stimulate more patient involvement!

Press Release



Luxemburg, 16th place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

Netherlands, 5th place: Dutch patients are quite well informed and empowered – now is the time to also entrust them with direct access to specialists!

Estonia, 12th place: There is a clear need for financial incentives within the healthcare sector to stimulate more patient involvement!

Malta, 23rd place: A proper patient rights law should be adopted ASAP to ensure access to second opinion and own medical record!

Norway, 7th place: Norwegian patients are quite well informed and empowered – now it is time to entrust them with direct access to specialists!

Poland, 25th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Portugal, 29th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Romania, 30th place: Regular financial incentives need to be implemented in the healthcare sector to ensure that patients can take responsibility for their own care!

Slovakia, 10th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Slovenia, 9th place: Good healthcare can further improve by offering the citizens interactive healthcare information 24/7!

Spain, 24th place: Patients must be allowed to choose their healthcare provider in order to enable real partnerships – this is especially crucial in mediocre healthcare systems.

Sweden, 15th place: The Swedish government should stop being nice to SKL and introduce binding patients' rights ASAP!

Switzerland, 3rd place: A provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable patients' choice!

United Kingdom, 17th place: There is a clear need for financial incentives within the healthcare sector to stimulate more patient involvement!

The Report is funded by an unrestricted research grant from Novartis.

For more information, the Report and the Matrix: www.healthpowerhouse.com

Contact: Ms Kajsa Wilhelmsson, VP External Affairs, +32 (0)496-23 55 30.