

Iceland makes a spectacular entry in the European annual healthcare ranking

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Iceland was ranked 3rd out of 33 countries when the 2009 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) was presented today in Brussels. The Netherlands win for the second year the annual survey of EU healthcare, with a record 863 points, followed by Denmark (819), last year's runner-up.

Iceland scores 811 points from a potential 1,000 and generally performs better than most countries already members of the European Union.

"Iceland essentially, because of its location, has built a healthcare system with the capability of serving 2 million people, which is serving 300 000", states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. "Also, the absence of specialist doctor training in Iceland, where young doctors all spend 8 – 10 years abroad in good hospitals, provides Icelandic medicine with high-level skills and good professional contacts."

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 2009 EHCI 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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