

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

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Ireland climbed two positions 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 Ireland 13th 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).

Ireland scores 701 points from a potential 1,000 and generally performs rather well at outcomes but quite poorly when it comes to e-Health. Ireland was ranked behind Belgium and Finland but ahead of the UK.

"Ireland has been climbing steadily in the EHCI", states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. "However, the Irish healthcare system seems to have a domestic 'marketing' problem – the responses to the patient organization survey, which is part of the EHCI research, give a much less positive picture than the official data".

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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