

Swiss healthcare steady among the very best, says annual European ranking – but finds weak spots

Brussels, September 28, 2009

Switzerland stayed among the best healthcare systems of Europe when the 2009 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) was presented today in Brussels. The 2009 EHCI, the annual survey of European healthcare, ranked Switzerland 5th out of 33 countries with 788 points from a potential 1,000, two positions better than last year. The Netherlands win the ranking for the second year with a record 863 points, followed by Denmark (819), newcomer Iceland (811) and Austria (795).

The Swiss score high in categories such as short waiting for care, access to medicines and treatment outcomes. The Index ranks Switzerland ahead of Germany but behind Austria.

“Switzerland has an impressive ranking with a combination of rapid access to treatments, top outcomes and medicines available,” states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. “The Swiss pay a lot for healthcare – so it should be good. In this context you are surprised to find mean mammography performance and a low level of cataract surgery. But Switzerland still seems stuck in the model of patients having to rely on their doctor for information on health and pharmaceuticals.”

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

About the EHCI, contact Dr. Arne Björnberg

arne.bjornberg@healthpowerhouse.com, +46 705 84 84 51

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com or contact Dr. Raluca Nagy, raluca.nagy@healthpowerhouse.com, +32 472 61 24 63