

Press Release



British healthcare ranked 13th in Europe for consumer-friendliness

Brussels, November 13th 2008

British healthcare does not make the top ten of most consumer friendly healthcare systems in Europe, according to the 2008 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI). The 2008 EHCI, the annual survey of EU healthcare, ranked the UK 13th out of 31 countries. This marked an improvement from the UK's 2007 performance, where they were placed 17th. The improvement can be mainly attributed to good e-Health implementation. The Netherlands (winners of the inaugural EHCI in 2005) lead the ranking, with a score of 839 points, followed by Denmark (winners of the Diabetes Index in 2008), Austria (EHCI winner in 2007), Luxembourg and Sweden.

In the six categories, covering 34 performance indicators, the UK scored 650 points from a potential 1,000. Despite some performance, the British healthcare system remains mediocre, falling down on major key indicators of quality, including waiting times.

"The British have done a good job on patients' rights and information, similar to Denmark or the Netherlands. This explains the improvement in the ranking," states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. "However, unlike Denmark and the Netherlands the improvement has not been across the board. They risk raising expectations that the healthcare system cannot deliver.

What more could be done in the United Kingdom?

"The UK's improvement in patients' rights and information should be applauded. However access – for both waiting times for treatment and uptake of modern drugs, remains a problem," says the president of the Health Consumer Powerhouse, Mr. Johan Hjertqvist.

About the Index

The Euro Health Consumer Index is the annual ranking of national European healthcare systems across six key areas: Patient rights and information, e-Health, Waiting time for treatment, Outcomes, Range and reach of services provided and Pharmaceuticals. First published in 2005, the EHCI is sourced from public statistics and independent research. The producer is the analysis and information organisation; Health Consumer Powerhouse. As with all other HCP Indexes, the organisation takes a consumer-centred position.

For more information and the explanatory report:

http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/archives/cat_media_room.html

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com

Health Consumer Powerhouse contact: Ms Kajsa Wilhelmsson, +32 (0) 496-23 55 30.

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