

The UK keeps ground in EU annual healthcare index

Brussels, September 28, 2009

The UK showed a stable rating among the healthcare systems of Europe when the 2009 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) was presented today in Brussels. The annual survey of EU healthcare ranked the UK 14th out of 33 countries. The Netherlands win the ranking for the second year with a record 863 points, followed by Denmark (819), last year's runner-up, newcomer Iceland (811) and Austria (795).

The UK scores 682 points from a potential 1,000 and performs poorly on waiting times but good on pharmaceuticals. The Index ranks the UK behind Ireland but ahead of Italy or Slovenia.

"The UK in 2009 has showed surprisingly negative feedback from patient organizations on the waiting time situation, particularly after government spending on the NHS has been increasing heavily", states Dr. Arne Björnberg, the Euro Health Consumer Index Director. "It seems that management of the behemoth NHS organization is difficult to do under a centralized paradigm."

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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