EHCI 2013 summary:

Economic crisis leading to ‘two-speed’ European healthcare provision

Brussels, November 28, 2013

The financial crisis has led to increasing inequity in healthcare services across Europe. This is one of the key findings of the 2013 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI), launched today in Brussels by the Health Consumer Powerhouse. The results show that there is now a ‘two speed’ delivery of healthcare, depending on the consumers’ country. The quality of care that consumers can expect is discernibly higher in richer countries than in poorer. In addition, the gap is widening.

Dr Arne Bjornberg, Chairman of the Health Consumer Powerhouse (HCP) and author of the report, said: “Healthcare decision makers are concerned by the impact of the economic crisis. Today’s report demonstrates they are right to have these concerns.” He continued; “Our 2013 ranking indicates that wealthier countries are clustered towards the top of the Index, and this is more marked than in previous years.”

There are also concerns for healthcare companies and patients over access to new therapies and treatments. Financial restraints have encouraged growing numbers of countries to increase the delay between the approval of new medicines and therapies and their gaining reimbursement. Because newer treatments are often more expensive, slowing their introduction is a way of containing costs. Dr. Bjornberg explained: “Although we have seen this tactic in previous HCP Indices, it was usually restricted to poorer countries. However, it is now becoming commonplace in richer countries, such as Sweden and Switzerland.” There is data that both countries have extended the time to adoption of new drugs by an average of 50 extra days.

For the first time since the first EHCl was launched in 2005, there is now a clear gap in healthcare provision between the affluent, financially strong parts of Europe and the less affluent, crisis-struck countries. Although treatment results such as cancer and infant survival keep improving all over Europe, there are almost no medium-income countries in the top half of the Index in 2013.
About the Euro Health Consumer Index

The Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) has established itself as the “industry standard” of modern healthcare monitoring since the start in 2005. The 2013 edition ranks 35 national European health care systems on 48 indicators, covering six areas that are essential to the health consumer: Patients’ rights and information, Accessibility of treatment (waiting times), Medical outcomes, Range and reach of services provided and Pharmaceuticals. The 2013 Index has now introduced Prevention as a new area, with eight indicators.

The EHCI is compiled from a combination of public statistics, patient polls and independent research conducted by the Sweden-based research company Health Consumer Powerhouse Ltd.

The 2013 EHCI has been supported by unrestricted grants from Pfizer Inc, USA, Medicover S.A., Belgium, and New Direction Foundation, Belgium.

The EHCI material is published on the HCP website: www.healthpowerhouse.com. It is freely available and anybody is welcome to quote it, referring to the source.

For questions and information, please contact:

Arne Bjornberg:
+46 70 584 84 51; arne.bjornberg@healthpowerhouse.com

Johan Hjertqvist, HCP Founder & President:
+46 70 752 18 99; johan.hjertqvist@healthpowerhouse.com