Irish healthcare beats UK by 11 points in European Union health consumer ranking

Brussels, 1st October 2007

Ireland has the 16th most consumer friendly healthcare system in Europe, according to the 2007 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI) launched today in Brussels. This is a score that shows that the massive investments in healthcare have provided positive results, even if more should have expected. Ireland is just in the middle group along with Czech Republic, the UK, Malta, Spain and Slovenia.

The Euro Health Consumer Index for 2007, the annual survey of EU healthcare, ranked the Irish healthcare service as 16th out of 29 countries for their public healthcare systems. Austria tops the rankings with a score of 806, followed by the Netherlands (winner in 2005), France (winner in 2006) and Switzerland, Germany and Sweden.

In five categories, covering 27 performance indicators, Ireland scores 592 points out of a potential 1,000.

“First and foremost, cut the waiting times for most treatments – they are still far too long! Although it is doing far better overall this year than in the 2006 Index, Ireland remains at the bottom for waiting times”, concludes Dr. Arne Björnberg Research Director for the Euro Health Consumer Index.

What more could be done in Ireland?

“Looking at the scale of investment in Irish healthcare, you should reasonably expect better access than in Greece or Latvia – but it’s not. Maybe it takes consumer empowerment in addition to reduce waiting times?” states the president of the Health Consumer Powerhouse Mr Johan Hjertqvist, analysing the index outcomes for Ireland.

About the Index

The Euro Health Consumer Index is the annual ranking of national European healthcare systems across five areas that are key to the consumer: patients’ rights and information, waiting times for common treatments, care outcomes, the generosity of the system and access to medication. It was first published in 2005. The Index is compiled from a combination of public statistics and independent research and is presented in a consumer friendly matrix. The Index is produced by the (Brussels-based) analysis and information organisation Health Consumer Powerhouse. The Index takes a consumer-centred position.

To view/download the 2007 Index and the explanatory report: www.healthpowerhouse.com/ehci

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com

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