



European Health Forum Award Goes To Irish-Northern Irish Project on Caring for Patients with Kidney Disease

- Award for excellent cross-border cooperation in rural regions
- All EU countries took part in at least one of the 15 projects submitted

The “European Health Forum Award” for 2008 goes to the Irish-Northern Irish CEWT Renal Project, a cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland for improvement of the care of kidney patients in rural areas at the border of both sections of the island. The cooperation encompasses cross-border use of medical facilities (for ex. dialysis stations) as well as the establishment of common quality standards and patients’ freedom to choose medical services, such as taking advantage of operations in the respective other country.”

“The jury of experts decided in favour of this project because specific options for improving healthcare were developed in economically disadvantaged border regions and are being put to extraordinarily effective use,” says jury chairman Günther Leiner. “This is no longer about a good idea, but a model of cooperation which is being very systematically pursued.”

The prize was awarded after the plenary session of the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) 2008 taking place from 1 to 4 October in Bad Hofgastein. Austrian Health Minister Kdolsky points out that the prize is important particularly for a small country like Austria: “In a small country such as Austria virtually no region is far from a border, thus cross-border initiatives provide good opportunities for us to become more efficient and better.”

Cross-border healthcare is one of the keywords of 21st century health policy. “The European Health Forum Award being presented this year for the second time reflects this as well. I congratulate the winners of the award on their exemplary project, which will make a substantial contribution to the improvement of healthcare in the border regions.”

*The winning project and other projects submitted for the award will be presented in a press conference at the European Health Forum Gastein.
(Press release to follow).*

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European Health Forum Award 2008 An Overview of the Eight Finalists' Projects

The “European Health Forum Award” was presented for the second time for cross-border projects in the European Union at the European Health Forum Gastein. The award went to the Irish/British CAWT project for kidney disease.

Another seven outstanding projects involving all 27 EU states ended up as finalists. These initiatives are an important foundation for the exchange of best practice examples.

CAWT – Kidney Diseases (Ireland / Great Britain)

Cross-border cooperation for the improvement of quality in nephrological care

With kidney disease this health policy initiative is involved in an area that requires the continual availment of healthcare services (dialysis). Cooperation between health and social service organisations are the focus of this project.

“Healthregio” – Regional network for the improvement of the healthcare system

(Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary)

“Healthregio” is the first major cooperation in the healthcare sector in Central Europe. Its primary concern consists of eliminating the differences between the “old” and “new” EU states. The countries involved are Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. As these are countries with very different healthcare systems until now, the challenge lies in raising the quality of healthcare to the level of the best country in the respective area of healthcare.

This initiative is to improve especially the quality of healthcare in border regions.

Mental health for Southeastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia)

All of these countries have been faced with an increase in mental illness since 1990. The goal is to raise the norms and standards in mental health services in these countries to those of other EU countries. The project also focuses on improved national legislation in the area of mental health including the protection of human rights.

Improved recognition of alcohol abuse in the clinical environment using web-based programmes and biomarkers (Austria and Germany)

The main focus of this initiative lies in the clinical sphere, as alcohol consumption causes complications in stationary treatments and operations and has a strong negative impact on the success of operations. In the scope of the project a questionnaire was developed concerning improved recognition of the excessive alcohol consumption of patients undergoing an operation. The use of biomarkers to recognise alcohol abuse is to be supported as well.

European Health Forum Award

EuroHEAT. Improvement of reaction to extreme weather events and heat waves in the area of public health (France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Great Britain, Spain, Macedonia, Croatia)

This project prepares the involved countries for the health-related consequences of climate change. The European countries involved used the results of the EuroHEAT project to introduce a national heat health action plan. There are also joint training programmes for specialists in the relevant areas of expertise.

European Heart Health Charta (EU member states and Switzerland)

This project is devoted to one of the most frequent clinical patterns in the EU, cardiovascular disease. In the EU more than two million people die from it, with 45% of the fatalities among women and 38% among men in Europe. 28 countries have officially adopted and introduced the Charta. The aim of the Charta is the improvement of public awareness about cardiovascular disease and its risk factors based on the provision of support programmes for public servants, health organisations and lobbies.

European Immunisation Week (EU member states and others)

European Immunisation Week takes place on a yearly basis. PR and targeted communication is to raise awareness of the significance of immunisations. 33 European countries participated in the European Immunisation Week in 2008. The focal points were vaccinations against diphtheria, hepatitis B, measles, mumps and rubella as well as polio.

HELENA – Improvement of the Nutritional Habits of Youths (Austria, Germany, Greece, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Sweden and Spain)

With the cross-sectional study Helena an important scientific basis was established for measures to improve nutritional behaviour from ages 13 to 16. The aim is to create an environment in which positive health-related behaviour and a healthy lifestyle are promoted.

More information:

http://www.ehfg.org/fileadmin/ehfg/Website/Preis/2008_shortlisted__projects.pdf

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