



Press release: 15th European Health Forum Gastein, 3 – 6 October 2012

European Health Award 2012: Shortlisted projects - from preventing breast cancer to popularising tobacco taxes

Six cross-border health projects have now been short-listed for the prestigious European Health Award 2012. They cover topics such as breast cancer, Epidermolysis Bullosa, diabetes, health literacy, paediatric nutrition and tobacco taxes. The prize-winner will be chosen by a panel of leading health experts, and the award presented at the European Health Forum Gastein in early October.

Bad Hofgastein, August 21, 2012 – Six trail-blazing projects are in the running for the prestigious €10,000 European Health Award 2012, sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and FOPI, which brings together Austria's research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. The winner, to be chosen by a panel of leading health experts, will be announced during this year's 15th EHFG Congress, being held in Bad Hofgastein from October 3 to 6.

The European Health Award honours projects and initiatives aiming to improve medical care in Europe. The main criteria are that more than one European country should be involved in the project and that the results are transferable to other states and directly benefit a substantial part of the population or relatively large patient groups.

“The point of this award is to encourage not just intelligent, workable initiatives but ideas that lend themselves to effective trans-national cooperation,” Prof Dr Günther Leiner, founder-president of the European Health Forum Gastein, said today. “We are pushing a cross-border agenda in health policy. It is one important way to face up to the huge challenges now confronting Europe in public health such as the extraordinary advances in medical science. For the foreseeable future there must be ever-increasing specialisation and cooperation.”

Prof Leiner said that promoting transborder cooperation in health policy had been behind establishing the award in 2007: “Today it's become even more urgent. The challenges are now even more multifaceted and complex. They are compounded by demographic developments and by austerity measures introduced because of the financial crisis.” There is a risk of short-sighted cuts in healthcare instead of tackling overlaps and inefficiency: “What we have needs to be allocated properly. We need to share best practice.” The European Health Award, together with the European Health Forum Gastein, are aimed at encouraging such an approach, Prof Leiner said.

Last year's award went to the Child Safety Card, a pioneering system for monitoring and reducing injuries to children. In 2010, it was won by the Chronic Diseases Alliance, a project bringing together 10 public and professional health organisations active in areas such as heart disease, diabetes and respiratory and liver diseases to arrive at a common prevention approach.



The 2012 short-list in detail

1. Breast Health Day – Prevention and Early Detection of Breast Cancer

In Europe, breast cancer accounts for 140,000 deaths and 450,000 new cases every year, the main cause of cancer deaths among women. One in nine women will be diagnosed in their lifetime, yet a third of breast cancers are preventable or an estimated 178,200 by 2020. Breast Health Day was first launched in October 2008 to raise awareness and disseminate information about the prevention and early detection of breast cancer. Each year a new campaign is developed that includes posters, pamphlets, media backgrounders, a website, and a digital editorial campaign on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube.

Participating countries: Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan.

2. EB-CLINET – Clinical Network of Epidermolysis Bullosa centres and EB experts

Epidermolysis bullosa (EB) is a severe but rare condition which is poorly treated in many European countries. An estimated 30,000 EB patients and their families across Europe stand to benefit from this project, whose key goals and objectives to be realised within a two-year period include initiation of multi-centre clinical studies for new treatment methods, development of an online database of best practice, and the launch of a specialised medical training and further education programme. It is thought this model could be emulated for other rare diseases.

Participating countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. EB centres and specialists in Chile, China, India, Iran, Mexico, USA.

3. EUBIROD – European Best Information through Regional Outcomes in Diabetes

Diabetes is currently killing 325,000 people a year in Europe. There are approximately 35 million diabetes sufferers, and that figure is projected to increase 23% by 2030. Monitoring quality of care can improve policy and practice. The project (2009-12) is implementing a sustainable European diabetes register through coordination of existing national/regional frameworks, and the systematic use of the BIRO (Best Information through Regional Outcomes) technology, updated and improved to facilitate adoption by a growing community of partners. So far the project has brought about updated standardised definitions for diabetes and a common framework for standardised measurements. BIRO software is up and running in 20 countries, with a BIRO academy and e-learning platform to support training and dissemination.

Participating countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.



4. HLS-EU – the European Health Literacy Project

Health literacy is known to have a major impact on health outcomes and on health inequalities, but there is a lack of knowledge and of comparable data across Europe, and few scientific networks to support research, stimulate policy, and monitor practice. The project, backed by eight national advisory groups and a 400-strong professional network, will develop an instrument to measure health literacy across Member States, to fill existing data gaps, and ensure comparability. Collaborative networks of stakeholders will be created at national and European levels to further research, knowledge sharing, policy and professional development.

Participating countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland and Spain (Belgium, Israel, Portugal, Switzerland and the UK are expected to follow). A Nordic network (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland) has also been initiated.

5. Paediatric Nutrition in Practice – Extensive E-learning

This project, accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Medical Education (EACCME), aims to close teaching gaps in nutrition and paediatrics. Good nutrition during the foetal period and the first years of life substantially contributes to long-term health. It is also a major underlying factor in obesity and non-communicable diseases, and malnutrition remains a major cause of death, particularly in developing countries. Eastern Europe suffers from both malnutrition and obesity. Nine training modules address the impact of nutrition during infancy and childhood. Single modules have gradually been introduced over the last 12 months and have been visited by 5,200 students so far.

Participating countries: Programme available in Europe and recognised in USA and some Asian countries. Modules are accessible all over the world and are already actively used by postgraduate African students.

6. Tob Tax – Making Tobacco Tax Trendy

This project is aimed at reducing tobacco consumption to decrease the longer-term burden of non-communicable diseases, and promote health outcomes particularly for young people. Tobacco use in Europe is the leading risk factor for respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Price increases are the most effective way of reducing tobacco consumption. Training programmes have been developed for the public health community at national level, with content approved by a panel of experts and tailored to participating countries and regional needs. So far there have been five successful regional capacity-building workshops. National advocacy tool kits in 19 European languages are to be published online in September.

Participating countries: Croatia and all EU Member States bar Cyprus and Estonia.

EHFG Press Office

Dr Birgit Kofler

B&K Kommunikationsberatung GmbH

T: +43 1 319 43 78 13

M: +43 676 636 89 30

Skype: bkk_birgit.kofler

E-Mail: press@ehfg.org