

6 Projects Vie for European Health Award 2014



Six cutting-edge, cross-border projects have been shortlisted for the prestigious €10,000 European Health Award 2014, which honours projects and initiatives aiming to improve public health or healthcare in Europe. A panel of renowned health experts will select the prize-winner, to be announced during the 17th European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) Conference set for 1-3 October 2014 in Gastein Valley.

The European Health Award is sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and FOPI and brings together Austria's research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. To be selected for the award, the project should be a joint undertaking (i.e., more than one European country is involved in the project); it should show innovation and be sustainable; and the results are transferable to other states and address a significant health threat, directly benefiting a substantial portion of the population or relatively large patient groups.

The award seeks to promote effective initiatives and encourage the development of projects that foster transnational cooperation, according to Professor Helmut Brand, president of the International Forum Gastein. "At this year's EHFG we will be discussing how we can meet visions of a social and prosperous Europe, and the fact that we need politicians and stakeholders who will champion smart, sustainable and inclusive policies."

The shortlisted projects, Prof. Brand noted, have identified problems of healthcare delivery or significant threats to population health. "(They) are directly addressing issues such as efficiency, quality of care and access to care that are so important to ensure our health systems are innovative," added the professor. They include the following:

- ITAREPS (Information Technology Aided Relapse Prevention Programme in Schizophrenia) - The ITAREPS system represents a mobile phone-based e-Health solution for weekly remote patient monitoring and disease management in schizophrenia and psychotic disorders.
- SALUS (Scalable, Standard based Interoperability Framework for Sustainable Pro-active Post Market Safety Studies) - This aims to complement ongoing medical drug safety studies through a scalable and standard-based interoperability framework which especially focuses on post-marketing pharmacovigilance activities.
- ExplainTB - This crowd charity project offers free educational videos in several languages at the point of care: more than 300 volunteers worldwide contributed content, translations, proofreading, voice-overs or acted as doctors in the films. The app allows the display of movies and written information in about 28 languages.
- EpiSouth-plus Project - It is aimed at increasing health security in the Mediterranean Area and Balkans by enhancing preparedness to threats, which can affect health security, and to bio-security risks at national/regional levels in the framework of International Health Regulation implementation.
- Euro-Peristat - The project aims to develop a high quality, innovative, internationally recognised and sustainable European perinatal health information system, producing data and analysis on a regular basis for use by various stakeholders.
- EUTrigTreat - The project elucidates molecular and environmental mechanisms, which underlie life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias, and how genes and external factors modulate and initiate catastrophic electrical abnormalities in the heart. Improved understanding of key arrhythmia mechanisms enables EUTrigTreat investigators to develop mechanism-targeted diagnostic and therapeutic approaches including novel drug and device therapies.

The European Health Award was established in 2007 by Honorary President and EHFG founder Professor Günther Leiner. Promoting cross-border cooperation in health policy had been a key motivating factor behind the establishment of the award, and seven years later "the challenge has become even greater," Prof. Leiner explained.

"Today's health challenges are compounded by factors such as demographic developments increasing the demand for health, the growing prevalence of chronic conditions and by increasing costs and scarcity of resources," Prof. Leiner noted. "Promoting a cross-border agenda in health policy, multi-country working and the development of transferable initiatives remains as important as ever."

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