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Congress Prelude

The 21st Congress of the European Association of Hospital Managers will be held in the historic setting of Trinity College – in the heart of the city of Dublin – the oldest university in Ireland. It was founded in 1592.

The Congress is being hosted by the Health Management Institute of Ireland. Its President, Michael Lyons, said "Delegations from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Switzerland have already registered and there has been significant interest from many other countries such as Iceland and the Netherlands, to name a few. Delegates are invited to attend a Precongress presentation on Health Services in Ireland, on Wednesday, 30 August; hospital visits can be arranged by the Organising Committee for delegations then. We are looking forward to welcoming our European colleagues to Ireland for what promises to be an informative and enjoyable Congress."

The Congress will address the key challenges facing Healthcare and Hospital Management in Transition. The role that the EU plays in healthcare has expanded in recent years and the role that it should play in the future is the subject of debate and controversy. David Byrne, the first EU Commissioner for Health, is well placed to provide a considered view on this important topic and will deliver the keynote address at the opening ceremony.

The opening session will focus on Innovation in Hospital Practice and Organisation and it will draw on the experiences of innovators in various aspects of healthcare.

- Rapid advances in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) have the potential to make an enormous contribution to clinical and management practices in healthcare. The possibilities of the digital hospital will be explored. The opportunities and challenges facing hospital managers will be reviewed in terms of how they cope with the complexity of technological decisions and the significant resources and cost involved in implementing the hospital of the future. The successes and lessons learned by Son Llatzer Hospital in Palma, Majorca – who has implemented a global, integrated and accessible clinical information system – will be addressed.
- Judith Pelham, President Emeritus of Trinity Health (USA), will particularly focus on the human resource challenges in hospital organisation and will look at what we can do to address the current situation with its shortage of critical staff, the changing work environment and expectations of staff. She will illustrate her presentation by giving practical examples gathered during her 30 years in healthcare. She will also look at organisational values and culture as the underpinning for those strategies, and then review methods to obtain information, and understand staff satisfaction and needs. Examples of strategies to update skills and facilitate ongoing training, recruitment and retention, work redesign, quality and safety, management and leadership training, and the role of information technology will be discussed.
- Form following function has become the most important driver of change in terms of hospital design. Breakthroughs in materials and construction capabilities have been matched with enhanced understanding of how the use of materials, space, light and colour can transform the functionality of the hospital environment. Innovative hospital design and construction integrating medical, sociological, ergonomic and technological needs into the design process will be explored.

These innovations in management will be addressed by Professor Charles Normand from Trinity College, Dublin, who will draw on evidence related to the process of change, and warn of the dangers of excessive innovation and change. He will also suggest some ways in which it may be possible to enjoy the benefits of structural and organisational change without the massive costs that change can generate. The presentation will focus on the need to balance stability and innovation, whilst improving the performance of complex systems such as hospitals. Two hospitals will serve as case studies illustrating their performance, as well as a study of organisational change.

Service Delivery and Quality Systems will be the focus of another session and delegates will have the opportunity to explore and review leading edge practices in service development and quality management systems. The diverse range of topics in this session serve as a precursor to the changes in service development.

Quality Management: Does it Pay off?

- Healthcare is facing serious quality problems while costs are exploding today. Quality management therefore becomes a major strategic challenge. Jaap van den Heuvel, CEO of the

Canisius-Wilhelminas Hospital, will examine the strategy, deployment and quality management process of the Red Cross Hospital in the Netherlands. Growth, efficiency improvement and optimising quality of care were chosen as their main strategic goals. To achieve these goals, they implemented and integrated an ISO 9001: 2000 quality management system with Six Sigma, a quality improvement approach from industry. The results of five years of quality management – illustrated by the scores of a number of performance indicators – clearly showed that they were able to achieve all their strategic goals, based on their findings. They believe that the combination of ISO and Six Sigma provides the proper instruments to bring healthcare organisations to a higher level of performance.

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- Patient Safety will be addressed in a joint presentation by Kaj Essinger from Swedish Medical Injury Insurance and Robert Wendin from Marsh European Healthcare. Kaj Essinger recently chaired a European Working Group on Clinical/Medical Indemnity on behalf of HOPE. The report shows a trend of expanding claims and increasing insurance costs in many European countries. It also reveals a worrying trend of insurance companies leaving the healthcare market. Robert Wendin will give practical advice to managers on how they can reduce risks and costs by using modern systems and management practices.

- Hospital Governance in Europe Governance is a major topic in the organisation of healthcare on the macro and micro level. Kristof Eeckloo from the Centre for Health Services, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Belgium will present the results of a survey conducted among 522 hospital directors.

- Dr Hannu Leskinen, County Director, Kainuu County in Finland will discuss the experiment of the Kainuu Region, where joint authority was officially introduced at the beginning of 2005. Kainuu is the first region in Finland to have the main responsibility for welfare services and to have been given the authority that traditionally resided with the state's regional government.

Kainuu Region is now in charge of the entire public healthcare and social welfare, with the exception of day care services. Furthermore, special healthcare that was formerly part of the hospital district's duties has now been transferred to the region. They have organised the social welfare and healthcare services based on their patients' needs, following and supporting their life span.

In accordance with the enacted law, the goal is to promote the development in the Kainuu region and strengthen its future by increasing regional self-government and inter-municipal cooperation. The regional policy-making has been centralised into one organ, the aim of which is to find better solutions to the social and communal problems in Kainuu. Simultaneously, the aim is to provide the citizens from different municipalities equal access to public basic services.

Alternatives to hospital delivered services: the role of IT in supplying radiological services. Joan Guanyabens, Director of Organisation and Development of Diagnosis Information Technologies of UDIAT, Spain will describe his experience in using organisational innovation to exploit technological advances and create virtual collaborative arrangements for sharing information and applying specialist knowledge, making full use of powerful imaging processing tools. He will stress the need to move beyond teleradiology to guarantee the best standard of care, ensuring fast, efficient service by interfacing HIS/RIS systems to provide imaging specialists with clinical histories and enable direct rescheduling of follow-up procedures, and creating shared PACS to give clinicians access to images.

Management and change will be addressed by Gus van der Upwich, Neuhimmel – ForumGGMBH. The model of change management being advocated may appear common sensical – partnership between management and workers – but is not always adopted in practice. This session will explore tried and tested practical approaches to effective change management projects.

For the past several years, the Center for Creative Leadership has been conducting a global research project investigating what factors are essential to insuring the success of future leaders within their organisations. Greg Laskow will summarise this research-entitled "The Changing Nature of Leadership" as well as present data from leaders of healthcare institutions as to how they compare with the research findings. The comparative data have been gathered from leaders who attended leadership development programmes throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as well as from large healthcare delivery consortiums in the United States. Finally, given these projections, implications for talent development of healthcare leaders will be presented from additional CCL research conducted over the past 35 years.

Scotland has adopted a strategy that relies on a fully integrated approach to delivering improved health to the people of Scotland. Derek Feely, Director of Healthcare Policy and Strategy from the Scottish Executive will offer insights into how greater levels of integration have been achieved in Scotland than elsewhere.

The Congress will end with a session on Health Systems Perspectives with Guy Peeters, Chief Executive of the University Hospital of Maastricht examining Cross Border Co-operation. Win de Gooijer, Professor of Healthcare Management, University of Leiden, the Netherlands will speak on current trends in EU Healthcare Systems based on his soon to be published book on this subject.

Visit the Congress website for the Preliminary Programme and further information including registration and accommodation: www.eahm2006.ie

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