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Germany

Setbacks for German E-health Smartcard

Due to problems encountered in the first seven pilot sites for Germany's flagship national e-health smartcard programme, several key clinical components are currently being re-evaluated.

Gematik, the German national health IT organisation, announced that their new priority is electronic referral letters and electronic insurance claims. Electronic prescriptions, electronic emergency data sets, and electronic medication safety applications will, for the time being, be put on the backburner.

An interim report shows that the electronic emergency data set and the electronic prescription with the smartcard as data medium have not worked so far. Problems included PIN code issues and the need for digital signatures.

Given these problems, Gematik has decided to do the easier things first. The rollout is still scheduled for 2009 but it means that doctors will have to go online sooner than originally planned, creating tension between doctors and health insurance companies.

For more information, please visit: www.gematik.de

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