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National News

France

Remote Wound Care Pilot in Caen From September 2010, a regional network of skin wound telecare will operate in Caen, Normandy, France. The plan is part of the government's drive for hospital reform and the telecare system will eventually be extended to more French cities.

The brainchild of Dr. Dompmartin from the dermatology unit of the Caen University Hospital and Dr. Blanchere, head of the telemedicine network, the initiative will enable the patient to receive wound care at home. The first set of volunteers will be patients with chronic wounds such as leg ulcers and bedsores.

About twenty freelance nurses wishing to participate will be trained and provided with the transmission material (imaging and sound). "They will take care of 10 patients each. Thanks to a 3G mobile phone equipped with specific software, they will film the wounds to be treated." The remote consultation will take place over the Internet with an expert nurse holding a university degree in wound care management. The expert nurses will have their decisions validated every week by a dermatology specialist, and a video conference will be held once a week.

The freelance nurses will visit the patients staying at home. They will film the wounds and convey the film to the expert nurses to obtain their opinion. The reports and prescriptions aimed at the patients' general practitioners will be channelled through a secure messaging tool named 'Apicrypt'.

The motive behind the network is to not only to facilitate the return home of the patients and thus to cut costs, but also to combat doctor and nurse shortages.

UK

Liberating the NHS: Improving Outcomes for Patients

Detailed proposals for how the NHS will improve healthcare outcomes for patients and judge its success were set out in a public consultation by the Department of Health in July.

The White Paper Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, published on 12 July, explained the government's intention to create an NHS that is more responsive to patients' needs and achieves better outcomes that are among the best in the world.

A new framework has been proposed, which aims to refocus the NHS on the outcomes achieved for patients rather than the process targets of the past that had no clinical justification.

The framework includes a set of national outcome goals which patients and the public can use to judge the overall performance of the NHS and hold the government to account for progress. The framework and the national outcome goals will form a combined mechanism by which the Secretary of State for Health can hold the new NHS Commissioning Board to account for the outcomes it is securing for patients.

The consultation document suggests five outcome domains:

Preventing people from dying prematurely;

Enhancing the quality of life for people with long-term conditions;

Helping people to recover from episodes of ill health or following injury;

Ensuring people have a positive experience of care; and

Treating and caring for people in a safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm.

Of the new framework, Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said, "Instead of politically motivated targets which lack clinical evidence, we will measure the outcomes that are most important to patients and that are relevant to healthcare professionals. These will be backed up by authoritative, evidence-based quality standards that will ensure everyone understands how those outcomes can be achieved."

He also stressed the need for input from all those involved in the healthcare sector, "I want to hear the views of healthcare professionals, patients, carers and the public on how the new system should work, and what we should measure to ensure the NHS is focused on what is important to patients and what improves their overall experience of NHS care."

Spain

1.6 Million Government Investment in Three Health Centres for Canary Islands

The government remains committed to contributing to the construction in 2010 of three socio-medical facilities in the Canary Islands, with an investment of 1.6 million euro. This has been assured by the Minister of Health and Social Policy, Trinidad Jimenez, during his visit to Gran Canaria, which highlighted the partnership between the central government and the Canary Islands to carry out this objective.

Jimenez recently visited two of the social health centres in the Canary Islands, "El Pino" and 'Centro para discapacitados psíquicos Reina Sofía' (El Lasso) which care for mentally handicapped patients and the elderly and disabled. Jimenez stressed that these health centres not only improve patient care but also generate local jobs. The two centres previously mentioned have so far generated 362 jobs.

Jimenez has announced that in Lanzarote a social care centre for people suffering from Alzheimer's will be constructed and in Fuerteventura, the Ministry of Health and Social Policy will participate in the construction and equipping of a residence and occupational centre for the disabled. In addition, Santa Cruz de Tenerife will continue with the construction of a social-health centre.

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