

epSOS project: Technical specifications about to be published

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BARCELONA, SPAIN - (HealthTech Wire News) - In a few weeks the European epSOS project on cross-border interoperability will publish the technical specifications for the European Patient Summary and the European ePrescription, according to project coordinator Fredrick Linden, Sweden, speaking at eHealth Week 2010.

The epSOS project, initiated by the European Commission on 1 July 2008, aims to build and evaluate a service infrastructure capable of cross-border interoperability between Electronic Health Record Systems in Europe. The overall goal is to facilitate the medical treatment of European citizens in countries other than their home country. Currently, 12 European countries are actively involved.

For the Barcelona conference, epSOS has set up a demonstration case illustrating the benefits of genuine cross-border interoperability for European citizens: twenty-five-year-old Maria, an Erasmus student from Austria, is working at Dijon Hospital in France, and is suddenly struck by abdominal pain.

The doctors in Dijon can now issue a request for past medical documents to the French National Contact Point (NCP). This request is translated and forwarded to the Austrian NCP. Maria's medical records are converted into a document compliant with epSOS standards, which is then sent back to Dijon together with a pdf version of the original document.

This all happens automatically, and it should take no longer than ten seconds, said Linden. Technical interoperability is implemented through various international standards such as XML and HL7 V3. Semantic interoperability is guaranteed by collaboration with several European standardization organizations. In the case of 25-year-old Maria, SNOMED CT, LOINC and ICD-10 are used to convert the document.

Linden said that the implementation phase for the various epSOS pilot projects would begin as scheduled in January 2011. Testing will start as soon as November or December 2010, he added. The pilot phase will run until the end of 2011, but the European Commission has already called for an extension to the project.

The goal is both to develop new technical specifications and to involve other countries that have not actively participated in epSOS so far, Linden said.

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