



NETC@RDS service for the electrification of the European Health Insurance Card

Press Release – Project Description

The NETC@RDS project is aimed at achieving initial deployment of an online service for the announced electronic European Health Insurance Card (eEHIC) in 15 EFTA/EU countries. The service has already been successfully tested – market validation phase – in 85 pilots across 10 EU member states. This initial deployment project phase will extend the existing implementations to enable health care access for European citizens who provide evidence of entitlement in any of the 305 service sites (566 service points) across the 15 participating European countries. This can be via an eye readable EHIC, or a national health insurance electronic card, or via certain National e-ID chip card issued by the responsible government authorities of the participating partners. An online verification provides assurance to support acceptance procedures for both health insurances and health care providers.

In line with the EU rules, all member states and the EFTA countries are issuing the European Health Insurance Card as a replacement of paper entitlement forms for trans-European mobile citizens to receive health care during a temporary stay in any of the European Economic Area countries. By Summer 2005, about 50 millions EHIC were already circulating. Digitalisation of the EHIC is the next frontline.

The NETC@RDS service for the EHIC electrification serves three distinct processes: automated data capture for identification based on a common set of data elements, on-line verification of entitlement rights via national portals, and minimal data provision which can contribute to subsequent back-office interstate-billing. The project ultimate scope is to achieve a mutual use and recognition of the pan-European standardised eEHIC as a means of validating entitlement to unplanned health care.

The key measure is that any “mobile” European citizens with their card and in need of non-planned medical treatment can benefit from the NETC@RDS service. The most important target users are the insured European mobile citizens who could be supported by the European-wide awareness and adoption of NETC@RDS services whenever they need to access unplanned health services in other participating countries. Two additional target users are players of the service: the health care providers in hospitals and ambulatory health care offices and the health insurance and cross border cost clearance organisations. By one hand, the introduction of the NETC@RDS service enables manual and paper based administrative processes to be reduced also providing an accurate electronic EHIC data set for post processing. By the other, electronic data capture and automated checking mechanisms provides a much better base for clarification of inconsistencies, acquisition of statistical data, and improvement of the pan-European reimbursement process.

The NETC@RDS project objectives are aimed at:

- **Providing** reliable and interoperable solutions for the European Health Insurance Card electrification
- **Enhancing** interstate data exchange while using secure IT network software applications incorporating professional and personal smart cards with PKI and Digital Signature
- **Contributing** to mobility and skills convergent policy while improving Health Care Access for Mobile citizens

These objectives will contribute to:

- **Support** the initiative of the European Commission aiming to harmonize quality and availability of the Health Care and Social services delivered inside the EU
- **Reduce fraudulent or irrelevant claims**, thus avoiding expensive interstate health costs claim procedure
- **Foster the Smart Card & Telecom Industry** inside the European Union

- **Enable patients and health professionals** to collaborate and share insurance and other patient data for continuity of care
- **Offer a user-friendly and secure systems** to provide healthcare workers with important administrative information

NETC@RDS service is expected to be the crystallisation point for a future electronic EHIC on the pan European level. Continuous growth of the project consortium membership, expanding from 4 nations in 2002 to the current 15, combined with the sustained support throughout from major social security organisations indicate that this technical solution has a very high probability of long-term viability.

The project deployment is in accordance with the Community regulatory framework and the specific rules issued by the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers (CASSTM), which plays a crucial strategic coordination role amongst Member States in this area. In this light, the NETC@RDS for eEHIC project activities are complementary to the CASSTM mission.

The partners of the NETC@RDS include health care providers and health insurance agencies from. They are:

- Statutory health insurance or health fund organisations
- Technical and research institutions or standardisation bodies acting on behalf of the health insurance organisations
- Hospital and/or health professional associations
- Regional governments

Industrial partners and other public administrations have been involved in this project phase.

NETC@RDS cooperates with the TEN4HEALTH eTEN project in the field of healthcare services for mobile citizens.

www.netcards.eu