

epSOS

Smart Open Services for european patients (epSOS)

eHealth initiative to support medical assistance while travelling and living abroad

Travelling around the European Union is taken for granted, until something goes wrong. The 'Smart Open Services for European patients' project (epSOS) intends to remove linguistic, administrative and technical barriers within the EU, by making it easier for people to receive medical assistance based on their medical history, especially when they are away from their home.

Patient Summaries and ePrescriptions

Patient summaries and electronic prescriptions (ePrescriptions) are two key services that enable high quality medical care. Such health records provide health professionals with essential information on the medical and medication history of the patient. In many situations access to such information can save lives (for example in case of allergies to medications, chronic conditions, blood disorders).

The epSOS project is a first step in addressing problems faced by doctors treating patients who seek health treatment when abroad. These problems include re-supplying essential medication that a patient has lost or forgotten, communicating medical situations to foreign-language doctors, diagnosing illness and prescribing proper medication with little knowledge of patient history.

Several Member States have implemented these services in their national healthcare systems and several others are about to do so. However, many of them cannot currently communicate with each other.

These services will only be widely used if they are trusted by both patients and healthcare professionals. Appropriate data protection, system security and performance criteria need to be included in any cross border application.

Objective

The objective of the epSOS project is to ensure that these national solutions can "talk to each other". epSOS aims at enabling health professionals to electronically access the data of a patient from another country in their own language, using different technologies and systems. It will also make it possible for pharmacies to electronically process prescriptions from other Member States, so that patients travelling within the EU can obtain the essential medicine.



The Approach

The project follows a bottom-up approach; it builds on existing technical solutions, and develops a set of specifications to ensure the interoperability of solutions, including security and identification systems and performance criteria.

The project will examine the level of maturity and deployment of patient summaries and ePrescriptions in the participating countries, and explore legal questions and develop technical specifications covering all basic components for a secure use of personal health data. In a second phase, the project will define, test and validate these solutions in real-life situations.

The approach will form the basis for a longer term, pan-European approach to building service solutions that will be able to work with each other.

The project responds to the commitment of Member States and the European Commission to achieve full interoperability of eHealth services. It will benefit from guidance provided by the Commission on how to make electronic health record systems work together.

Participants

The Project Consortium is a broad coalition of stakeholders. It consists of 27 beneficiaries representing 12 EU Member States including ministries of health, national competence centres, a research institute and an industry team of more than 30 companies.

Dissemination and Awareness raising

During the lifetime of the project, the project will work in close cooperation with the CALLIOPE network (Call for Interoperable eHealth services in Europe) to ensure that benefits can be shared with non-participant countries.

The Calliope network will be consulted on specific topics during the project. CALLIOPE's activities will contribute to raise awareness and create consensus around the overall issue of interoperability of eHealth services.



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Partners:

- Austria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

Timetable: from July 2008 to June 2011

Total cost: € 23,070,000

EC funding: € 11,000,000

Instrument: ICT Policy Support programme under the
Competitiveness and Innovation Framework
Programme (CIP)

Project Identifier: 224991

KEYWORDS

Patient Summary, EHR, Prescription, Interoperability,
Patient Safety, Quality, eHealth, Semantic, Ontology