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Health on Net chosen for French websites

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The French National Authority for Health (Haute Autorité de Santé - HAS), has chosen the online health information accreditation body Health on the Net (HON) to be the official certifying body of all French health websites.

The move builds on the longstanding collaboration between HON and HAS and means HON becomes the official accrediting body for all French health websites.

The HON Foundation has been chosen by the HAS to implement the certification of French health websites according to the French bill passed on the 13 August 2004. This certification will be performed by HON through the implementation of the HONcode (a set of eight quality criteria established by HON).

"Our certification (provided free of charge) is concise while giving guidance towards conformity and is unique in its kind" said HON Executive Director Celia Boyer.

She added "The HONcode enables the identification of sites of quality and confidence, thus contributing towards the general improvement of trustworthy information and Web sites, as well as helping the user in his search for health information."

France is the first European government to have taken the initiative of standardising the quality of the available online health information through the route of certification and accreditation. Other states have tended to develop national portals and health information resources, which vouchsafe the quality of patient information provided.

First established 12 years ago, early in the Internet-era, HON has come to be a widely recognised name, associated with accreditation with quality online health information.

HON now has links with liaisons worldwide to include the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN), where it has consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

"The collaboration between HON and HAS reinforces the need for reliable and trustworthy health information and thus, the necessity for quality standardizing bodies like the HON foundation" stated HON president, Professor Antoine Geissbühler.

HAS - or French National Authority for Health - was set up by the French government in August 2004 in order to bring together activities designed to improve the quality of patient care and to guarantee equity within the healthcare system. HAS activities range from assessment of drugs, medical devices, and procedures to publication of guidelines to accreditation of healthcare organisations and certification of doctors.

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