

This is the fourth newsletter in the Baltic eHealth project. The Baltic eHealth project is part-financed by the INTERREG III B programme and the Project aims at bringing eHealth solutions to the Baltic Sea Region – and thereby counteract rural migration. The lead partner in the Baltic eHealth project is MedCom International representing Region Syddanmark.

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“Cross-border eHealth in the Baltic Sea Region” –conference

The 21st and 22nd of May 2007 the final conference for the Baltic eHealth project was held in Stockholm. The conference was held in cooperation with another INTERREG III B project *eHealth for Regions* as both projects pursue the vision of “Health for All” citizens. The theme of the conference was “Cross-border eHealth in the Baltic Sea Region – Healthcare delivery for the patients of today and tomorrow”.

The conference was highly successful as it was visited by 190 participants from 20 countries and the two days were packed with information about cross-border eHealth, networking sessions and presentations of new projects. The conference emphasized the importance of the Baltic eHealth project. This was further underlined when the eRadiology and eUltrasound pilots were illustrated and demonstrated.

Find presentations and other useful information on the conference web site on www.ehealthconference.info

Field trials in eRadiology and eUltrasound

eUltrasound

In the eUltrasound pilot, the midwives at the Fetal Medicine Centre, Umeå, Västerbottan County, Sweden (FMC), get second opinions from specialists at National Center for Foetal Medicine at the University Hospital of Trondheim, Norway (NSFM). Until today 15 use-cases has been sent between the two hospitals for second opinion.

The biggest challenge of the eUltrasound pilot has been of technical nature concerning uploading and downloading of images and video clips. A satisfactory solution has eventually been found in using the PACS-server solution on the Baltic Health Network. The two clinics (FMC and NSFM) will sign a contract to continue the collaboration past the pilot phase and integrate the service into daily practise in difficult cases.

eRadiology

Today 150 patient cases have been sent between the SHF Funen Hospital (Denmark) and East-Tallinn Central Hospital (Estonia) and Vilnius University Hospital (Lithuania). Today only knees are sent cross-border but it is expected that in the future other examinations will be included. A Letter of Intent has been signed between the three hospitals in the pilot. By signing the Letters of Intent a close corporation between the hospitals has been established and it will bring the Baltic eHealth project further and bring eRadiology into daily practice and thus cross-border eHealth has been brought to the next level.

In addition to the Letter of Intent between the hospitals, two important contracts have also been signed. The SHF Funen Hospital has signed a contract with both East-Tallinn Central Hospital and Vilnius University Hospital, which will ensure that the reporting of knee images will continue for at least one year after the project ends in August.

The Structured Reporting Tool

A Structured Reporting Tool created during the Baltic eHealth project has shown its significance in cross-border eHealth services. The Structured Reporting Tool is a multilingual tool that can provide valuable assistance when the reading of a digital image is performed in one language but needs to be understood in a second. The tool can be used for requesting eRadiology services by completing a structured multilingual electronic request form and then provide the image data through the Baltic Health Network. Providers at other hospitals can then log in to respond to these requests and will deliver a report.

In the Baltic eHealth project, the Structured Reporting Tool consists of predefined sentences regarding findings and diagnosis for most common abnormalities in the knee. If a predefined sentence is applicable for a report, it can be selected and varied regarding to e.g. severity. The radiologist can if necessary put in additional information as free text. In the Baltic eHealth project any free text is translated by a multilingual secretary.

Users of the Structured Reporting Tool have been very satisfied and the tool will be further developed in the Baltic eHealth project so it can be used in the communication in the eUltrasound pilot. The tool will also be further developed in the R-Bay project.

The Rural eHealth Report

The scientific objective of the Baltic eHealth project is to illustrate that eHealth is an effective mean to enhance access to high quality healthcare services in rural areas and that the use of eHealth consequently contributes to counteracting rural out-migration (both for residents and health professionals). This issue, eHealth counteracting out-migration, has been studied in the Rural eHealth Report project.

The report is based on three independent country studies, in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, respectively, on the impact of eHealth on out-migration from rural areas, and the report presents, elaborates and concludes on the findings of these studies. The three country studies and an executive summary make up the 'Rural eHealth Report', and it is freely available at the Baltic eHealth project website.

R-Bay; Cross-border eHealth in an eMarketplace

Traditional eRadiology is provided using point-to-point connections between clients and providers. The Baltic eHealth project has proved that the establishment of the Baltic Health Network allowing point-to-point *cross-border* eHealth services is an important step in the direction of securing adequate access to healthcare services in sparsely populated areas/regions as well as preventing brain drain from the same areas/regions. But there are restrictions of this structure because the nature of the pilots in the Baltic eHealth project only allows point-to-point cooperation, based on bilateral contracts between the partners.

A new vision is therefore that traditional eRadiology is extended by creating an eMarketplace, in line with other online marketplaces, that will act as a commodity brokering and exchange service. The eMarketplace will enable the viewing and consulting of images from other organisations, regions or nations, thus enabling the sharing of healthcare resources on a pan-European basis. The R-Bay project is envisaged as an extension of the Baltic eHealth project, both in terms of time and in terms of structure and services.

The R-Bay project is lead by MedCom International representing Region Syddanmark (The Region of Southern Denmark) and is expected to initiate in August, when all 11 partners, many of whom are also partners in the Baltic eHealth project, meet in Tallinn, Estonia for the kick-off meeting. More information about the project can be found by contacting MedCom International www.medcom.dk or via email to Consultant Janne Rasmussen jar@medcom.dk

The Baltic eHealth project is coming to an end – but a new project called R-Bay is currently under negotiations under the eTEN programme regarding the continuation of the eRadiology pilot. Therefore, once Baltic eHealth ends in August 2007, you will automatically receive the R-Bay newsletter. If you do not wish to receive the R-Bay newsletter, please contact Jennie Søderberg, MedCom International, jsb@medcom.dk.

Further information:

Baltic eHealth www.Baltic-eHealth.org

MedCom International www.medcom.dk

Baltic Sea Region Interreg III B www.spatial.baltic.net

