

OmVard.se – Social entrepreneurship increases transparency in Swedish healthcare

On September 1st, Swedish social entrepreneurship company Sanocore AB launched the website OmVard.se. The name, translating into “AboutCare”, aims to bring further transparency in the Swedish healthcare system and to aid patients to a real choice of care by gathering data on various quality dimensions and present this data to Swedish patients, media and public.

Building on the Swedish tradition of openness in public information yet capitalizing on the apparent lack of user friendliness, coordination and accessibility found in public data so far, the site brings together data on medical outcome results, compliance to national guidelines for best-practice care, patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and waiting times to consultant visits and medical procedures. Combining these public data with voice-of-patients through results of patient surveys from individual counties and ratings from patient associations makes the site unique not only in Sweden, but also suggests a new concept for involvement in patients own care based on issues that really matters to the patients.

“We can already record an increased awareness among both the public and the healthcare providers about the existence or lack of data. Our user starts asking healthcare providers whom up to this date has chosen not to participate in national databases or to publish their results why that is so, and healthcare providers also has shown an interest and will to close this information gap. It’s all very exciting to be part of this new movement of patient empowerment” says Sanocore CEO Pontus Österberg.

Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, Sweden’s largest business federation, funds the project, allowing the site to be held clean of advertisements or drain public resources. However, the project is intended to act as a catalyst for the development of a state-run site with similar functionality in the future, an objective that is quite likely to succeed. Pressed by the launch of OmVard.se, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, just days later announced that they too are planning on a site to let patients compare different aspects of quality of individual healthcare providers to be opened in “the coming year or so”. Further, the Swedish social ministry will publish their investigation on an “independent body for accreditation and analysis of quality in healthcare” during the fall. The report is said to focus on the areas of information sharing to the public that apply to OmVard.se, thus making the social entrepreneurship site likely to achieve it’s objective and actually bring about a much longed for leap in patient empowerment.