First Prize award to Diagnostics in the Community scheme

An innovative pilot scheme delivered by the Croydon GP Federation has won first prize in the ‘Improving Patient Access’ category at the coveted HSJ 2008 Awards. The ‘Diagnostics in the Community’ pilot scheme brings Ultrasound, Echocardiography and MRI diagnostics to the heart of the Croydon community.

In collaboration with the NHS London, Croydon PCT and InHealth, the project was initiated by the Croydon GP Federation, a group of 85 like-minded GPs driven by a commitment to respond effectively to patients’ needs for improved access to diagnostics, treatment and care.

InHealth, which currently delivers an extensive range of diagnostic scans and images via the London NHS Diagnostic Service, was chosen by the Federation to provide the equipment, staff and support for the pilot scheme. Mobile screening clinics providing Ultrasound, Echocardiography and MRI examinations were located at six Croydon GP practices, based on the criteria of clinical, location and patient-focused practicality. All aspects of service delivery were jointly managed by the Federation and InHealth.

The scheme aimed to cut waiting times for diagnostic tests, reduce the referral to report time to 10 days, and ensure that no patient should have to travel more than 30 minutes for a diagnostic appointment. Patients had an extensive choice of location, and appointment date and time. Performance was closely monitored to provide measurable outcomes, and ensure transferability to the rest of the...
NHS. The project was led by Dr Agnelo Fernandes, Chairman of the Croydon GP Federation, and was in place in just three months from conception to delivery.

In awarding first prize in the ‘Improving Patient Access’ category to the Diagnostics in the Community pilot, the HSJ Awards judges praised the GP leadership and partnership features that helped to drive forward this major redesign project, its swift implementation, its rigorous quality assurance, the evaluation, and the genuine choice and powerful benefits afforded to patients.