

The Healthy Community 2000 - an initiative to set up an electronic network for the Austrian health system

Presented by Dr. Hannes Bauer, Vice Governor of Lower Austria

Based on the experiences of setting up an Austrian wide health net in 1999 / 2000 the Austrian Health Communication, an association to further an electronic network for the Austrian health system, has now taken on the task to set up an internet based network to cover all the communities in the federal state of Lower Austria. The title of the project is "**The Healthy Community 2000**". Homepages for each community following the same lay out and set up provide a series of decisive advantages.

The technical set up of the programme - The Healthy Community 2000 - is the **initiative of the state of Lower Austria** and the town of **Purkersdorf** has agreed to function as a model in the pilot project as regards to all the communities. To which extent the county of Lower Austria supports this idea can be seen in the fact that Dr. Hannes Bauer, Vice Governor and responsible counsellor for health affairs in the local government, has taken on the job to present the project at the European Health Forum Gastein. The underlying structure of internet network for the communities in Lower Austria should be finished by the end of this year and the domain "www.gesundegemeinde.at" will go onto the internet by the year 2001. This domain and the corresponding links will be an ideal support for the initiative "**Gesundheitsforum NÖ**", i.e. health forum Lower Austria, which - similar to associations other federal states - is responsible for promoting health education on the principles of a modern health system

. Austrian Health Communication is to be your partner in the field of networking in the health system.

The importance of presenting the health system of and to any community becomes obvious if you consider that within the coming two years nobody will look up a general practitioner or specialist in a telephone directory but will instead go into the internet to obtain information about special treatments, opening hours, or any other health related issues.

Compared to any printed brochures or guides many communities hand out at considerable costs and which outdate very quickly the internet is not only a lot cheaper but can also be updated rapidly every day. It does not rely on a rather expensive mail system and yet provides a complete survey of the health system easily to be updated.

Concerning updating information on health related topics information by the Secretary of Health, the counsellors of the federal states, regional or district officials as well as mayors of small communities the "health homepage" of a community can function as a kind of notice board that is virtually transferred to any household so that it does not matter if a citizen just happens to come by at the town hall to obtain health related information.

The health homepage should, however, be restricted to health issues only and must not be part of the advertisement homepage of any community. This does not mean that both homepages do not

offer links to each other.

The regulated lay out and contents of a health homepage for any community should enable any citizen of any community to access information the same way all over the country contrary to the rather different and sometimes quite lengthy homepages use for advertising. This should prove to be of real help in cases of emergency.

Moreover due to this homepage information on health statistics of communities, districts, regions, federal states and the Department of Health should be available at any time. What an option this will be.

As we live in country that depends heavily on tourism this network of the health system should also render important services to the tourist visiting our beautiful country.

This closely knitted net of information about Austria's health system in the states as well as the communities could well be a further incentive to spend holidays in Austria especially if you think how many people nowadays travel to recreate and to get well again.

Responsible for the content: Austrian Health Communication