

SEHTA awarded contract to support independent living for the elderly

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The South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA (<http://www.sehta.co.uk>)) has been awarded a three-year contract to support INNOVAge, a European Union funded project aimed at driving innovation, research and technology development for independent living among elderly individuals.

SEHTA will co-ordinate cross-regional analysis and be the leader of some mentoring activities with other EU regions involved in the ambient assisted living agenda.

By 2020, it is estimated that around a quarter of the EU population will be over 65 and the number of people aged over 80 will have more than doubled. This presents a set of new challenges for governments, support organisations, such as health services, and individuals, including elderly people themselves and their family members.

The purpose of INNOVAge is to increase the effectiveness of regional development policies in the field of 'eco-innovation' applied to independent living for elderly individuals through networking and mentoring activities. Specifically, there is an important role for ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) to help elderly individuals live independently for longer in their own homes, increasing their autonomy and assisting them with their daily activities.

"Because of an ageing population, there are already significant pressures on the health service and support services for the elderly," said Dr David Parry, CEO of SEHTA. "As more and more people live longer in the future, the challenges will increase in several areas, such as helping individuals to remain living in their homes, providing support for their medical needs and welfare, and also relieving some of the pressure placed on family members to look after their older relatives.

"It has already been proven that technology solutions, such as those in telecare and telehealth, have an important role to play. This project will enable us to explore the potential for creating systems and environments where independent living can be supported by advances in technology and applications."

SEHTA has been focused on the telecare and telehealth market for the past three years. In September 2009, SEHTA established its pioneering International Centre for Excellence in Telecare (ICE-T), a market-led approach to telecare and telehealth. Since its launch, ICE-T has grown to become a dynamic network of more than 1,500 contacts in companies, medicine and academia in the UK and internationally. The initiative has also helped to raise more than £1.5 million for innovative businesses involved in the development and delivery of telecare and telehealth products and services.

Editors Notes

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About SEHTA – www.sehta.co.uk

The South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA) is a company limited by guarantee, owned by its 1300 members.

Its mission is to facilitate the profitable and sustainable growth of companies and service providers in health and social care and the health technologies sector – pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices diagnostics and telecare/telehealth.

SEHTA drives collaboration and provides support services to members from Academia, Business and Care/Clinicians to address UK and international market needs

About ICE-T - International Centre of Excellence in Telecare

<http://www.sehta.co.uk/telecare>

ICE-T is a special interest group of SEHTA, which has become an international focal point for Telecare and Telehealth. ICE-T is a facilitating, innovative and catalytic organisation created to address and develop the business opportunities for Telecare and Telehealth, alongside meeting the needs of national government agendas to provide more efficient and effective health care using new communications technologies.

ICE-T is underpinned by the strength of South East England's health technology and communications industries, world-renowned universities and innovative care providers.