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New Telecare Centre announces major funding opportunities for telecare businesses

Telecare - the use of information and communication and sensor technologies to deliver health and social support to people to help them live as independently as possible in the lowest intensity care setting consistent with their needs and wishes.

Following its launch in September 2009 at the British Science Festival, the International Centre for Excellence in Telecare (ICE-T) is to unveil major UK and EU funding opportunities for companies which are involved in the development and delivery of telecare products and services. The money, totalling more than £1.3million, will be available for specific projects designed to make telecare a more prominent and effective strand of the delivery of healthcare services, both in the UK and internationally.

ICE-T will officially launch its first call for project proposals at the 'Access SEHTA and ICE-T millions' event on 2nd February, 2010 at Burford Bridge Hotel, Boxhill, Dorking, Surrey.

The money being made available includes three lots of £50,000 available to fund research projects for the development and use of telecare in residential care homes. SEHTA is also sponsoring a University of Oxford industrial training doctorate programme, available to three PhD studentships at £15,000 each.

Funding in telecare is being made available against a backdrop of the UK's increasing healthcare burden. With current estimates putting the number of individuals with chronic illnesses or long-term conditions (LTCs) at 17.5 million, and with potentially millions more undiagnosed, the UK's healthcare system is creaking at the seams. Furthermore, the UK is facing a decrease in the number of economically active individuals.

For people with LTCs, care needs vary according to the severity of their illness, from mild and easier-controlled symptoms requiring little care from the statutory services, through to those with severe symptoms requiring constant attention.

“Putting the harsh facts of the state of the nation’s health to one side, the problem we have is that traditional health and social care services are neither economically sustainable nor meeting increased demand for patient support on such as wide scale,” explains Dr David Parry, Chief Executive of the South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA) which is responsible for the ICE-T.

“Patient care is delivered through several disparate, autonomous public and private bodies, each with their own separate aims, independent budgets and differing responsibilities. It’s a recipe for confusion and inefficiencies, potentially leading to a postcode lottery of service provision.

“The statutory sector does not have the resources to deliver on this enormous agenda. To reduce the demand on existing services, there is a pressing need to continue with the development of prescribed telecare whilst starting the development of elective telecare.

“The technology to deliver comprehensive elective telecare services is largely available and many of the components have been trialled individually in pilot telecare projects. The next step is to provide them on a single platform and with a user interface that is simple and intuitive to operate.”

Other funds available include: 10 innovation vouchers, worth £4,000 each to businesses, to be spent in regional universities; and the launch of 15 EU innovation vouchers worth 6,000 Euros each to be spent in European partner universities.

Through its ICE-T initiative, SEHTA is putting out this call for new telecare product and service development proposals from consortia which include at least one SME, to meet the needs of the private sector residential home operators.

To access the agenda please click on the following link - <http://www.sehta.co.uk/node/2133>

To register for the event please email your details to Claire Ansett - claire.ansett@sehta.co.uk

For more general information about SEHTA and ICE-T, please contact:

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About SEHTA – www.sehta.co.uk

The South East Health Technology Alliance (SEHTA) is a company limited by guarantee, owned by its core members. It was launched in 2005 as an initiative by industry representatives supported by the regional development agency, SEEDA.

Its mission is to facilitate the profitable and sustainable growth of companies in South East England's health technologies sector – pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices and diagnostics.

SEHTA acts as a central meeting point, offering access to information, contacts, business support, and specialist business development services.

About ICE-T - International Centre of Excellence in Telecare

The vision for ICE-T, as a special interest group of SEHTA, is to become a global focal point for Telecare. ICE-T will become a facilitating, innovative and catalytic organisation to address and develop the business opportunities for Telecare, 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.