



Comunidad de Madrid

Regional Government of Madrid

In her first public announcement since being treated for breast cancer on February 22, Aguirre presents a pioneering Project in Spain to authenticate patients using biometric fingerprint technology.

- The program begins tomorrow in Vallecas and Parlahealth centers, for the identification of Alzheimer's patients and those with cognitive problems.
- Also participating in the pilot phase are the Infanta Leonor de Vallecas Hospital and SUMMA 112 ambulances.
- The program will create a database of patients for easy identification and access to health services in Madrid.

March 7, 2011 - The president of the region of Madrid, Esperanza Aguirre, today introduced a new biometric identification project that will allow locals the opportunity to be identified by enrolling their fingerprints, and announced that a test phase will begin tomorrow in the geographic areas of Vallecas and Parla. The project also includes the participation of ambulances of Emergency Service of the Community of Madrid, SUMMA 112, and creates a database of patients to facilitate their identification and treatment.

The new system will provide, on a voluntary basis, the digital fingerprint registry of patients treated at two health centers, a specialty center, nursing homes, two day centers for Alzheimer's patients and the Infanta Leonor of Vallecas Hospital, explained the president. Held at the Real Casa de Correos regional government headquarters, today's announcement was the first public event chaired by Esperanza Aguirre since she underwent breast cancer surgery February 22 at the Clinico San Carlos Hospital.

"It is a pleasure for me to introduce this pioneering project to Spain, recognizing patients through their fingerprints," said the president. She explained that the Ministry of Health is participating in its development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs and with the support of ICM (Information Agency of the Community of Madrid), "to give maximum safety to patients suffering from memory loss or disorientation."

The event was attended by the Vice-Minister of Culture and Sport and Government Spokesman of the Community of Madrid, Ignacio Gonzalez; the health minister, Javier Fernandez-Lasquetty; the Minister of Family and Social Affairs, Engracia Hidalgo; and the president of the regional federation of Alzheimer's, Lucia Rodriguez; as well as doctors and Madrid health professionals.

Great Support Work

Aguirre expressed her appreciation to the regional Alzheimer's federation for their collaboration in the development of this project, a thank-you that was extended to Alzheimer's patients and their families "for the magnificent support". The project holds a special relevance as 2011 marks the International Year of Alzheimer's.

The Madrid region is home to more than 50,000 Alzheimer's patients and 450,000 families that are affected indirectly by the disease. With this project, the regional government wishes to offer voluntary registration so those suffering from Alzheimer's can immediately be identified in an emergency, and so healthcare professionals can access their administrative and clinical information electronically.

The advantage of the system is that fingerprint recognition can also be incorporated into ambulances. This means that a patient who is being transferred can still be identified via his/her fingerprints, and the information can be sent ahead to the medical unit so it can prepare for the patient's arrival at the hospital.

This pioneering system in the Madrid community brings benefits both to citizens who use the health system, as well as health professionals. The unique identification of patients by fingerprint will make a significant improvement in patient safety.

Fingerprint registration is entirely voluntary and is conducted in selected centers. To be enrolled, a patient or his/her guardians must sign a consent form for the use of digital fingerprints, in accordance with Spanish data protection laws.

Pilot in Vallecas and Parla

To start the pilot, the Health Department will begin work in a real environment to assess the system's performance. The first beneficiaries are the residents of the geographical areas of Parla and Vallecas.

Fingerprint identification will be offered on a voluntary basis to all patients of the Health Center Federica Montseny and installed in the Emergency Department of Primary Care located in the same hospital. It will also be offered to patients of the Health Center Rafael Alberti, the Hospital Infanta Leonor, the Specialty Center of Federica Montseny, the Queen Sofia Foundation for Alzheimer's, dependents of the Department of Family and Social Affairs, and the day center in Parla.

To complete the project, SUMMA 112 will join the pilot and install a biometric / clinical information system in one of its ambulances.

In the coming weeks these organizations will complete the actions necessary to begin the pilot, including equipment configuration, professional training and an awareness campaign in centers that are participating in the pilot.

Healthcare Network of Madrid

In addition to top-notch health care and research, Alzheimer's patients require highly specialized social care. The community of Madrid has three centers specializing in the disease, with a health care network of more than 1,600 residential units and a day center. In addition, all new nursing homes being built in the region have Alzheimer's specific units.

Another fundamental aspect of care for Alzheimer's patients is family outreach. The community offers family workshops such as "Learning to Give Care", through which it provides support and training for relatives of patients to acquire the skills needed to serve their loved ones.

Aguirre reiterated that the Community of Madrid has one of the best healthcare systems in the world, and noted that a clear indicator of this is the average life expectancy in the region, which is nearly 83 years (82.96), the highest in Spain and higher than that of many other developed countries such as Germany, France or Japan.

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