



PRESS RELEASE:

Tuesday April 10: IMMEDIATE

EU funds FREE training for health reporters: 4 days in June

British health journalists are being offered up to 4 days of FREE training this summer, in an EU funded project to improve the quality of health reporting. Two days will be delivered in **London (June 11-12)**, and two in **Coventry (June 14-15)**. Editors and employers are also invited to arrange customised sessions for staff in their workplaces. The training has the support of the NUJ and the Medical Journalists Association.

The HeaRT (Health Reporter Training) program, funded through the EU's Lifelong Learning scheme, has been researching what courses and literature are available to equip European health journalists with the knowledge and skills needed to keep on top of a complex and fast moving specialist subject. It revealed extensive gaps, with relatively little in the way of specialist training. The project has also taken sample polls of journalists in all seven partner countries (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Romania, Spain, and the UK) to determine their background training, and what additional support they may find useful.

A package of training sessions has been designed, and each of the partner countries is now translating materials and preparing to test out the effectiveness in their country. Online resources will also be available over the summer for those staff and freelance journalists who cannot attend the courses in person, or who want to follow up on some of the issues as a result of attending a course. Most journalists in the polling said they preferred face to face training.

The British sessions will cover eight of the topics:

- The Business & Economics of Health Care
- Medical Research and Science
- Health Care Quality and performance
- Health Policy: government health reforms
- Understanding hospital and other financial reports
- Health inequalities
- Global Health
- How to evaluate conflicts of interest

The instructors will include veteran US health journalist Trudy Lieberman from the Association of Health Care Journalists, as well as experts on health care quality and hospital finances.

The training package is being organised in Britain by **Dr John Lister**, who lectures in health journalism at Coventry University. He says:

"This is a golden opportunity for existing health journalists, and for all those who think they may be interested – including student journalists – to top up their knowledge and skills on health reporting.

"Each two-day course gives a chance to recharge the batteries and rethink on subjects – we have worked hard to ensure as best we can that they will open up new angles, new issues, and story ideas for every participating journalist, no matter how experienced they are."

FURTHER DETAILS: full details of both two-day training packages in Britain are available at www.europeanhealthjournalism.com, and details of the HeaRT project are available at: <http://www.project-heart.eu/>

Dr John Lister can be contacted at: j.lister@coventry.ac.uk or on **07774 264112**.

NOTE: The courses are free of charge, but spaces are limited, and the project is required to deliver a certain number of training opportunities. **So to reserve a place, journalists should send a refundable deposit cheque for £50, dated June 11 2012, and made out to 'Coventry University' to:**

Dr John Lister, Media Department, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB.

All cheques will be returned on arrival at the commencement of the training. Places can only be confirmed when the cheque is received, and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.