

## High Level eHealth Conference “Me and My Health – Transcending Borders” Conclusions – eHealth Week 2015, Riga, Latvia

Across the European Union, the development of eHealth continues to be an important factor in the strategic transition to citizen-centric healthcare and the empowerment of citizens to make informed decisions regarding their own health and wellbeing. In responding to demands for greater transparency, accountability and more integrated care, governments have recently begun adopting a “No decision about me, without me” policy approach - reflecting the importance given to patient engagement and the willingness of citizens to have access to their own health information. In this respect, investments in eHealth are showing promising results and are quickly becoming a popular “channel” for citizen interaction with the healthcare system. At the same time, EU governments are embracing “digital by default” policies across all sectors, which places increased demands on national data and service integration and highlights the importance of intersectoral engagement in achieving national health objectives.

The theme of eHealth week 2015, “meHealth – My Health empowered by ME”, captures the essence of eHealth and mHealth as the enablers for access to personalized, citizen-centric healthcare with citizens actively engaged in making decisions about their own health.

Recognising that:

- European countries face common challenges - managing the burden of Noncommunicable disease, ensuring sustainability, continuity and quality of healthcare services, strengthening health information systems and addressing health and social inequalities.
- Citizens continue to demand a more transparent, effective and accessible healthcare system that is supported by standardised care processes and availability of data when and where it is needed.
- mHealth solutions are becoming increasingly available and the market is experiencing a period of enormous growth, driven by the affordability of end-user devices and their potential as tools for citizen empowerment in healthcare, including health promotion and monitoring.
- Electronic health data can be used for research to contribute to the development of personalised medicine and improve public health.
- Investments in eHealth at the national level continue to grow and evidence of improvements in clinical outcomes become more tangible.
- National eHealth platforms are evolving as the vehicle for communication between healthcare professionals and between citizens and healthcare providers.

Acknowledging that:

- To truly leverage the benefits of eHealth investments and transition to the digital era, healthcare organizations are taking the opportunity to restructure and reengineer care processes, supported by staff with new competency profiles.
- The role of the patient has changed from being a *passive receiver* to an *active user* of healthcare services and information. This transformation is driving the demand for new models of healthcare delivery and is challenging the traditional roles and skills base of healthcare providers.

- Having a strong, national governance framework for eHealth & mHealth that leverages other national digital platforms (e.g. a national electronic identifier) is a vital component for success.
- Achieving interoperability of eHealth solutions continues to pose a great challenge for national authorities, though tools and frameworks to support activities are becoming more mature and available.
- Privacy and security of health data continue to be at the forefront of consumer concern in adopting eHealth solutions.
- Important gaps in health and digital literacy need to be adequately addressed to ensure that people are able to access healthcare services through eHealth channels.
- Reimbursement models for eHealth and mHealth are inadequate and are considered to be a significant barrier to adoption.

The participants of eHealth Week 2015 in Latvia, Riga call upon Member States of the European Union and industry leaders to take practical steps to:

- Focus national eHealth governance and strategies upon delivery of citizen-centric healthcare and to achieve necessary intersectoral engagement through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, led by the ministries responsible for health.
- View mHealth as a strategic asset for health and an integral component of national health policies. Programmes for health promotion should increasingly leverage mHealth as an important medium and draw upon evidence and experience gained from successful implementations globally.
- Encourage national authorities to develop innovative and sustainable financing and reimbursement mechanisms for eHealth and ensure accountability for implementation through a transparent monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Ensure that investments in eHealth support the adoption of standards and drive interoperability across the health sector by leveraging the *eHealth European Interoperability Framework (eEIF)*.
- Ensure healthcare professionals are immediately and systematically supported with learning opportunities and incentives to promote an effective, smooth and safe transition to an integrated care model enabled by eHealth.
- Address issues of health and digital literacy and facilitate communication between citizens and the health sector, by means of eHealth, as part of an overarching strategy for patient engagement and continuity of care.
- Develop research priorities for eHealth that are focused towards the practical application of health technologies for improving clinical outcomes, improving health information through Big Data techniques and the development of personalised medicine.
- Call upon International Organizations to harmonize their efforts for the development of eHealth and mHealth to enable the ministries responsible for health in Europe to serve citizens through the development of efficient and integrated health systems.