

Leveraging digital transformation for better health in Europe: Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023–2030

Draft resolution sponsored by Israel

The Regional Committee,

(PP1) Having considered the Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023–2030,¹ which was developed following consultation with Member States;

(PP2) Recalling previous World Health Assembly resolutions WHA58.28 (2005) on e-health, WHA66.24 (2013) on e-health standardization and interoperability, and WHA71.7 (2018) on digital health, as well as the Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025, adopted during the Seventy-third World Health Assembly in decision WHA73(28) (2020);

(PP3) Taking note of the report on the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases² and the document on health system transformation in the digital age during the COVID-19 pandemic;³

(PP4) Recognizing that people-centred digital solutions, when used appropriately, have the potential to help Member States reach the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and to make a substantial contribution to advancing universal health coverage, protecting the public in times of emergencies, and enhancing health and well-being;

¹ Document EUR/RC72/5.

² Document WHA72.29 Add.1 (2019).

³ Document EUR/RC71/7 (2021).

(PP5) Acknowledging that the successful uptake of digital technologies in health is contingent on public trust and empowerment in their use and the protection of fundamental rights, including through data security, data privacy and ethical use of data;

(PP6) Recognizing the health and economic consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and of any future pandemics or other emergencies, and noting the critical role that the digital transformation of the health sector can play in mitigating the risks from such health emergencies;

(PP7) Recalling the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health in Europe” (EPW), adopted in resolution EUR/RC70/R3, and acknowledging Empowerment through Digital Health as one of the flagship initiatives of the EPW;

(PP8) Noting the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, which identifies data and digital health as one of seven linked and mutually reinforcing accelerator themes to contribute to more equitable, rights-based and gender-equal health policies and primary health services;

(PP9) Noting the Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care (2018), which acknowledges the role of digital health in building sustainable primary health care and enabling individuals and communities to identify their health needs, participate in the planning and delivery of services and play an active role in maintaining their own health and well-being;

(PP10) Building on the legacy and considering the experience of Member States and partner organizations in the WHO European Region in the development, implementation and adoption of digital health policies, initiatives and projects;

(PP11) Acknowledging the need for political commitment, country ownership, international coordination and alignment, and collective actions of all relevant stakeholders to leverage digital transformation for better health in Europe with the aim of leaving no one behind;

(OP1) ADOPTS the Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023–2030 and its guiding principles, vision, strategic priorities, focus areas, illustrative actions, implementation guidance and future monitoring and evaluation framework;

(OP2) URGES Member States:⁴

- (a) to prioritize the use of digital solutions and necessary capacity-building to advance universal health coverage, protect the public in times of emergencies and enhance health and well-being, and to commit to achieving the vision and strategic objectives outlined in the Regional digital health action plan;
- (b) to enhance or develop governance mechanisms for digital health through national strategies and related policy frameworks in order to help achieve national health goals and improve health systems;
- (c) to develop effective partnerships that bring together governments, health organizations, research institutes, nongovernmental organizations, industry and relevant stakeholders across all sectors to align their efforts, coordinate, collaborate, prioritize and monitor progress in the digital health area, and – in the area of development of digital health standards, including a standardized nomenclature – to ensure, as appropriate, coherence with relevant initiatives;⁵
- (d) to build public trust by involving, educating and empowering end users, particularly health workers and citizens, in the design, development, application and use of digital solutions in order to provide better access to health services and to improve disease prevention and control;
- (e) to develop, as needed, legislation and policies that enable digital transformation in the health sector and ensure the ethical, safe and secure use of health data and digital solutions, ensuring protection of personal integrity, consistent with democratic principles and international human rights obligations;
- (f) to better leverage digital transformation in health to promote health and well-being and contribute to addressing the social determinants of health by:
 - (i) adapting to the current environment and health situation and trends;
 - (ii) ensuring that decisions on and investments in digital health are evidence based and needs driven;
 - (iii) implementing the necessary changes to the financial, infrastructural, human, organizational and cultural resources of the digital ecosystem, respectful of national context;
 - (iv) measuring the digital health literacy of health workers and citizens and enhancing their skills through digital health literacy programmes;

⁴ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

⁵ For example, the European Health Data Space by the European Commission.

- (v) preserving health equity, gender equality and human rights as core values;
- (vi) establishing an integrated system to monitor, evaluate and ensure accountability for policies, plans, programmes and interventions;
- (g) to strengthen health information systems, health data and information use and governance for health-related public interest purposes;
- (h) to prioritize actions that will help overcome present and future challenges related to the interoperability of digital technologies for health, health workforce planning, infodemics and the spread of misinformation, predictive analytics and omics, as well as technology's impact on mental health and overall well-being in age-friendly environments;
- (i) to document and disseminate to the international community, as appropriate, case studies and lessons learned in relation to the adoption of digital solutions, in particular, cost-effectiveness analysis and compliance to standards;
- (j) to report on additional indicators for measuring and assessing digital health, when available, as proposed in the document Measurement framework for the European Programme of Work, 2020–2025: approach, targets, indicators and milestones, adopted through resolution EUR/RC71/R7,⁶ while taking into account existing monitoring capacity and obligations and avoiding any unnecessary increases in reporting burden;

(OP3) REQUESTS the WHO Regional Director for Europe:

- (a) to implement the proposed Regional digital health action plan and provide an update every two years, reviewing and updating the list of illustrative actions as necessary;
- (b) to support the implementation of the Regional digital health action plan as part of the Empowerment through Digital Health flagship initiative of the EPW, by providing leadership, strategic direction and technical guidance to Member States;
- (c) to continue to advocate for:
 - (i) safe and equitable digital solutions as a key approach to improving health at scale in the Region, in coordination with other relevant international and regional bodies, taking into account their work in this area;
 - (ii) adequate resource mobilization;
 - (iii) efficient technical cooperation;

⁶ See also EUR/RC71/INF./2.

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- (d) to provide technical support, expert advice and normative guidance to Member States, on request, to enable digital transformation in the health sector in Europe, in line with the EPW and the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025;
 - (e) to promote full utilization of the network of WHO collaborating centres for informatics and telemedicine and for the classification of diseases to support Member States in related research, development and innovation;
 - (f) to continually identify, update and share evidence, good practices and knowledge bases on digital health, using all appropriate communication tools, with special focus on effects and outcomes and possible mitigations of the impact of digital marketing in the areas of health behaviours and treatment opportunities;
 - (g) to constitute a strategic partnership council for data and digital health to share information and encourage collaborative innovation in the European digital health ecosystem;
 - (h) to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework in coordination with Member States to guide them in tracking progress in digital health and to allow regional comparability;
 - (i) to report to the Regional Committee every two years on progress made in implementing the Regional digital health action plan, to review and update the list of illustrative actions as necessary, and to submit a midterm report to the Regional Committee at its 78th session and a final report at its 81st session.

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