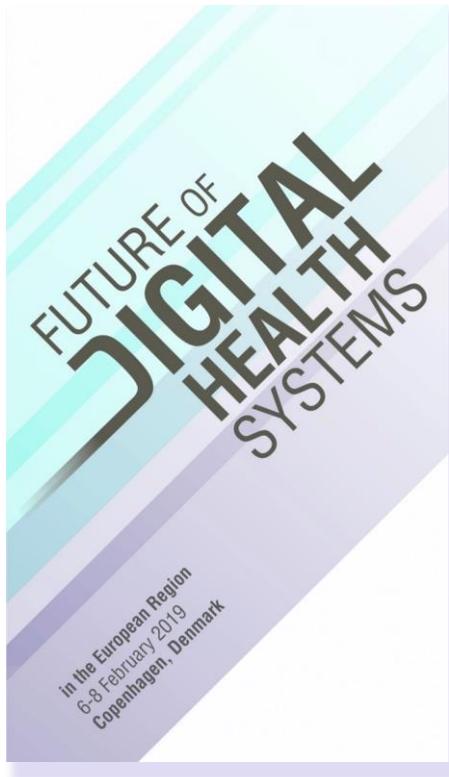International Hospital Federation

WHO Symposium FUTURE OF DIGITAL HEALTH SYSTEMS in the European Region.
6-8 February 2019 Copenhagen.

What you need to know about digital health Systems
(source WHO web site)

1) Digital health goes beyond the use of mobile and internet technologies
Today the term digital health often encompasses electronic health (health-related information, resources and services provided electronically) as well as developing areas such as advanced computing science (for example, big data – large volumes of data from different sources that can provide valuable insights into population health) and artificial intelligence (AI), wherein computer systems perform tasks that would normally require human capacities, such as decision-making.
The technologies that digital health draws upon include telemedicine, mobile phones and applications, wearable devices, robotics, virtual reality, AI and genomics – a discipline that uses the genome sequencing data of an individual to diagnose diseases.

2) Digitalization can help make health systems responsive and sustainable
Longer life expectancies, increasing numbers of people living with chronic conditions and rising costs of health care are putting pressure on health systems around the world.
Digital health technologies can improve access to health services, reduce costs, improve quality of care and enhance the efficiency of health systems. They can also provide opportunities for self-care. For example, remote monitoring devices and wearables help people better manage their own health, thereby reducing the burden on health systems and helping to make them more sustainable. Technologies that help people live healthier lives can also reduce costs for health systems.
Digital health innovations, particularly AI, can make health systems more effective and personalized. From detecting skin cancers early by analyzing moles to assessing someone's predisposition to certain diseases to developing medicines tailored to individuals, AI can have far-reaching impacts on health systems.

3) Digital health enables the transition from treatment to prevention
Digital health technologies offer ways to self-manage health, with a focus on preventing disease and illness rather than simply treating them. Digital devices are already helping to track heart rate and blood sugar. By alerting a person if they should visit a health-care provider, they can reduce expensive visits to emergency rooms. In providing ways to capture and use health-related information, these devices help people live healthier lives.

4) Digital health systems call for modified roles of health-care professionals
Digital health technologies can enable patients to receive care without physically going to a hospital or clinic. This means that health-care professionals will need to have the skills to use digital health tools, and to guide patients in understanding and using digital solutions to improve their health.
Digital health systems can empower and engage patients, making them co-designers of care. This shared decision-making between health workers and patients demands trust, a sense of partnership

and transparency in their interactions. Health-care professionals become collaborators in a patient's journey to health, while still providing empathy and a human touch in support of patients' well-being.

5) Digitalization allows health-care professionals more time to practise medicine
People often ask whether digital health innovations, particularly AI, will make health-care professionals redundant. In fact, technologies such as AI will help to reduce health-care professionals' administrative burden and other repetitive aspects of their jobs, allowing them more time to do what they do best – practice medicine.
For example, digital solutions that automatically capture and analyze data can ease professionals' workload, giving them more time with patients and enabling them to achieve better treatment outcomes. Digital devices that help people follow their medication regime or post-operative protocol free up health workers to spend more time with individual patients when they need them. Digital health systems can also help deal with current and projected shortages of health-care professionals.

6) Digital health systems can help reduce inequalities in health
Telemedicine already offers remote medical services using information and communication technologies. It can serve people in isolated areas by providing access to medical services that may not otherwise be available or affordable.
Digital health systems can also make quality health information more accessible, promote health literacy, promote healthy behaviors and provide access to support networks for patients. All of these factors contribute to reducing inequalities in health.

Summary of key ideas from sessions attended

Digitalization is a tool to improve and support health system development. It will change the way health services will be provided. **IPCHS, human centered management of data**, which is the desired future, will only be possible by a digital transformation of the healthcare systems. **Data must follow patients** and nothing for me without me.
To achieve that we need right eGovernance to create an ecosystem for digital health evolution; invest in technology; manage, gather and analyze data but also transform it in knowledge for better decision taking. We will be able to evolve from a reactive to a proactive healthcare, working not only on medical data but also on behavioral data**, supporting prediction and** empowering people to address the determinants of health. The f**uture is moving from treatment to prevention and, possibly to prediction.** The health workforce will be able to get the most from their competencies: AI helps to **enhance health professionals' capabilities**, no replace them. Machines spare us for a better-qualified human work. **In that environment, three elements will be determinant: share, transparency, access.** Security becomes a key element. Also the way and which outcomes we measure and how will have to accompany this change to a better health for everyone.

Useful websites:
http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2019/02/who-symposium-on-the-future-of-digital-health-systems-in-the-european-region (useful information about the symposium). Opening speech at the WHO Symposium on the Future of Digital Health Systems in the European Region
https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/research-and-expertwork/projects-and-programmes/nordic-ehealth-research-network-nern Norwegian Center for E-health Research, measuring progress in digitalization.
https://www.medcom.dk/medcom-in-english/about-medcom Danish Health Data Network, data exchange and interoperability.
https://www.oulu.fi/cht/ Centre for health and technology, University of Oulu
https://www.sundhed.dk National Danish e-health portal
https://www.himss.eu/about-himss/himss-international HIMSS Europe, promoting healthcare transformation thought digitalization. Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society.

Afternoon Plenary 7 February: Why Digital Health?
From left to right: Bente Mikkelsen, Division of Non-communicable diseases and promoting health through the life-course, WHO regional office for Europe; John Crawford, Independent Consultant, UK; Céire Costelloe, Senior Lecturer, Department of primary Care and Public Health, Global Digital Health Unit Director, Imperial College of London; Usman Khan, Executive director European Health management Association; Walter Ricciardi, professor of Hygiene and Public Health, Catholic University of Sacred Heart, Italy

Hans Kluge, Director, Division for health system and public health, WHO regional office for Europe; Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director, WHO regional office for Europe.

Opening plenary 6 February
From left to right: Ellen Trane Norby, Minister of Health, Government of Denmark; Olzhas Abishev, Vice-Minister of Healthcare, Government of Kazakhstan; Hon. Chris Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health, Government of Malta; Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director, WHO regional office for Europe; Mark Pearson, Deputy-Director for Employment, Labour and social affaires OECD