



Collaboration the key, says first international policy forum on digital health

Media statement

International collaboration is critical if nations are to harness the power of new and disruptive technologies to collectively advance digital health for their citizens, experts say.

Senior healthcare, industry and research professionals have called for a greater role for cross-border initiatives underpinned by global standards and specification pathways.

The first International Policy Forum for digital health, held over two days as part of global digital health and informatics congress MedInfo23, brought together a wide range of senior executives from governments, international VIPs, ministerial delegations, as well as senior representatives from industry and the scientific community.

The forum was co-hosted by the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) and the Australasian Institute of Digital Health, with a large number of regional and global participants representing public and private sectors.

In its public **Communique** released today, the policy forum foreshadowed an exponential increase in consumer demand for information to aid personal decision-making about health and care.

It said the delivery of healthcare continued to evolve in a digital world, and governments had a responsibility to ensure its quality and efficacy.

“The disruptive transformation of healthcare provides the tipping point for governments to take a different path than in the past. A unique opportunity exists now to respond to these disruptions in a timely, collaborative, and measured manner and to effect sustainable regulatory and policy pathways for a new era of healthcare.”

The forum called for healthcare leaders to be “bold, radical, and stay the course”, saying there were common challenges across nations that needed to be addressed.

“Leaders across healthcare must make tough decisions, such as addressing workforce challenges, changing behaviours, introducing progressive enabling regulation and ensuring the healthcare system adapts to an ageing population using digital technology.”

Healthcare systems needed to achieve more complete, reliable and accessible healthcare information via standards that enhanced interoperability.

This would drive better healthcare experiences, integrate care and support the rights of citizens to have access to their healthcare information.

“As leaders in the international digital health sector, it is imperative that we build momentum, working collectively to enact meaningful change, support safe deployment of innovative technologies and deliver improved healthcare outcomes for all.”



The wide-ranging policy discussion covered innovations such as the deployment of artificial intelligence, stating that AI required careful integration with existing healthcare systems to ensure health equity was maintained and that systems remained safe and trusted.

“This requires governance structures that have sufficient authority, while also being adaptable to rapidly changing technology capabilities.”

The International Policy Forum Communiqué is available in full [HERE](#).

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