Digital Health
Transforming healthcare delivery

Digital health initiatives introduced in urban areas of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have been used as effective solutions to improve identification, management and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a growing unmet need worldwide.

When digital health solutions are successfully integrated within existing health systems, quality healthcare can increase and become more accessible to patients, more efficient for providers, and more cost-effective overall.

Five key focus areas when creating scalable digital health initiatives:

1. Program offers tangible benefits addressing an unmet need, built with end-user input
2. End-users of the digital tool must be engaged, trained and motivated
3. Technology should use existing infrastructure and be simple, adaptable, and easily integrated into current health systems
4. The initiatives should align with broader healthcare policy, with sustainable funding
5. There needs to be appropriate infrastructure to support initiative at scale

An effective digital health solution will be specific to the health system, and endorsed by the Ministry of Health (or relevant health authority). It will be supported by committed and engaged partners who can provide long-term funding and robust project management, to successfully embed the initiative in existing systems and practices.

Examples of innovative digital solutions:

Digital patient monitoring and tracking tools help healthcare professionals to follow patient information across different services.

Patient information can form a database for population and business analysis to better understand health challenges.

Digital technologies can help in screening and diagnosis:
- Apps which help with screening can be used by non-traditional health partners
- Health call centers can provide support to patients in hard to reach places

Digital reminders can be used to prompt patients to keep taking medication, book a next appointment, or continue making lifestyle changes:

- mHealth from Fhi360
- Broadband commission reports on digital health
- Digital health apps

For more information, please see the Implementation Guide and the Novartis Foundation website

We acknowledge the contributions of partners to the Novartis Foundation initiatives: Community-based Hypertension Improvement Project, Communities for Healthy Hearts and Better Hearts Better Cities