

**Health Workforce Impact Assessment Report
Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2024
146th Executive Board, February 2020**

Purpose of the assessment:

Resolution WHA69.19 on the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030, adopted by the 69th World Health Assembly in May 2016, requested the Director General to include an assessment of the health workforce implications of technical resolutions brought before WHO governing bodies (World Health Assembly and Regional Committees). This report presents the assessment results of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2024 (hereafter referred to as the Global Strategy) which aims among several objectives to trigger Member States action in digitalizing national health systems and providing digital health services to their populations.

Process of assessment:

An initial screening of the Global Strategy was first undertaken in July 2019 showing potential workforce implications. A more detailed examination was undertaken in September 2019 to understand the extent of the Global Strategy's dependency and impact on the health workforce.

Key points identified by the assessment:

- The successful implementation of the Global Strategy is dependent on the availability of digitally capable health workers at country level that can effectively use the tools and services availed by digital health systems. The success of health outcomes is also linked to the level of digital literacy amongst the populations.
- To acquire the needed digital skills, governments will need to invest in the education and training of health workers, including continued professional development, and in the set up and maintenance of technology infrastructure and environments. The latter will also have implications in terms of the skills needed for technology maintenance.
- The number and modality of clinical and other procedures will change in keeping with technological advancements. The health workforce will need to be equipped with a range of digital skills including the handling of data.
- Acceptance of digital solutions is dependent on health worker trust in their use, including confidence in the storage and transmission of data, reliability of tools, security, privacy and consent protocols. Policy- and decision-makers will need to consider how the implementation of the Global Strategy will impact the attitudes of health workers particularly their confidence in using digital tools.

- Digitalization will have impact on most aspects of management and regulation of the health workforce, although it is difficult to quantify the extent, nature and speed with which this impact will occur.
- Digitalization of healthcare and public environments could result in the creation of new job profiles as well as the optimization of existing roles and potential phasing out of redundant tasks. Governments will need to consider the impact of the above and provide the support needed for all health workers.
- To address these issues, the Global Strategy provides policy options and anecdotes to guide Member States as they implement the Strategy and its action plan. The Secretariat will develop norms and standards on digital competencies through its programme on digital education and health workforce capacity building. This includes utilizing partnerships with collaborating centres and affiliated professional associations to strengthen the role of health workers in utilizing and providing cost-effective and safe health services through digital means as appropriate.

Assessment statement: (A)¹ - A full assessment of possible impacts on health workforce was conducted, and it did not reveal any issue requiring consideration; the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2024 can proceed as per normal governing bodies processes.

Access to further support on health workforce is available from the Working4Health Programme: <http://working4health.org/>

¹ (A) - No specific issue requiring consideration.

(B) - Some specific modifications to the strategy/resolution are required to adequately factor in health workforce implications and requirements.

(C) - The strategy/resolution has major workforce implications or requirements, which need to be factored in as part of the official process of consideration by Member States.