

Written statement from IDF Europe to provisional agenda item 8: Progress Report on Leveraging digital transformation for better health in Europe: Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023-2030

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IDF Europe welcomes the adoption of the resolution EUR/RC72/R2, *Regional Digital Health Action Plan for the WHO European Region 2023-2030* and commends the advancements made since its adoption.

The digitalisation of healthcare systems can have a truly transformative impact on the prevention, management and care of diabetes and other noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). In the case of diabetes, digital health can enhance prevention and self-management as well as support the delivery of more personalised care. It also facilitates shared decision-making between healthcare professionals (HCPs) and people living with diabetes (PwD). For example, digital health solutions in the form of apps and online platforms allow PwD to tailor their diabetes management and gain access to knowledge, information and education. Such tools are critical for effective diabetes prevention and management.

Including people with lived experience is imperative at all stages of the digital transformation of healthcare systems. This is acknowledged within strategic priority three, which highlights the need to build networks and promote dialogue and knowledge exchange between partners, stakeholders and the wider public. Despite this, all too often and across all aspects of healthcare research and design, the inclusion of people with lived experience is still lacking or at best remains limited in scope. People with lived experience are experts in their own right and their inclusion is vital in all policy dialogues to ensure that any solution developed truly benefits them and meet their needs.

As also acknowledged in the progress report, ensuring equity within the digital health transition and adequate digital health literacy for all are significant challenges. Considerable inequalities persist for PwD in access to health services, medicines and digital health technologies, both within and between European countries. Health literacy is crucial for effective diabetes self-management, with studies showing that low literacy leads to poorer adherence to guidelines, increased hospitalisations and higher complication rates.¹ It is crucial that best practices to address equity and digital literacy challenges in digital health adoption and implementation be compiled and shared among Member States to ensure that the digital transformation does not exacerbate existing disparities or harm vulnerable communities, including for PwD.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7211311/>

Digital health has the potential to deliver higher quality of life and health outcomes while contributing to the development of more sustainable and robust healthcare systems. We therefore call on member states to support the adoption of innovation within their countries, in particular to promote the implementation of digital health solutions, ensuring that the voice of people with lived experience is fully integrated in the process and that no-one is left behind.

IDF Europe and the entire diabetes community in Europe are ready to collaborate with and support the World Health Organization and national governments to ensure an accessible, equitable and patient-centred digital transformation of the health sector across the European region.