

Leveraging digital technology for health outcomes

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By : BioVoice Correspondent - September 9, 2017



New Delhi: The George Institute for Global Health India has released a report on ‘Leveraging Digital technology for health outcomes’. This report captures all key recommendations which emerged during the discussions at the ‘Digital Healthcare and Technology Roundtable’ conducted by The George Institute in partnership with the Australian High Commission in the month of May 2017.

This report recognizes the importance of digital health as a key opportunity for co-operation between India and Australia under the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) envisaging greater co-operation and collaboration. It also outlines key steps that can be taken by the Indian Government in transitioning to digital health.

The report is being tabled before the joint working groups of senior officials on health.

Talking about the report, Dr Vivekanand Jha, Executive Director, The George Institute for Global Health said, “The digital India campaign being implemented by the government of India offers tremendous potential for strengthening health care delivery, accessibility and affordability. And the new health policy offers tremendous opportunity for technology enabled health care. We hope this report is useful for policy-makers as they plan this transition.”

The report touched upon some of the key aspects of healthcare which needs immediate attention at the highest level. It captures opportunities and recommendations emerging out of the digital health care and technology roundtable. Some of the key points are listed below:

- Need to set up a common platform in the form of an association on digital health seeking participation of expert stakeholders from the two countries, including representation from Universities, specialist research entities and market sector players.
- Need to establish a system that would ensure safe and secure collection, storage, and exchange of summary records between healthcare service providers across public and private sectors
- Need to put in place a robust surveillance system that helps in early detection and ensures a rapid response, which prevent treatable illnesses from aggravating to life-threatening conditions
- Creation of a web-based, mechanism to ensure daily collection and maintenance of data getting generated across urban and rural health set ups.
- Putting in place a system that would ensure dispensing medicines based on e-prescription based model that directly links urban and district level hospitals and community health centres to pharmacies and would prevent leakages in the drug disbursement and supply

The immediate expected outcome after this report will be the creation of a council of experts, who would structure the on-going debate on health technology use in India and address the multiple facets by working on a regulatory framework for IT-health policy. This association should work in collaboration with government and non-government stakeholders.

Consequently, technology would emerge as a key enabler to bridge the existing mismatch of healthcare facilities and will aid in developing a sustainable, more inclusive and collaborative health ecosystem.