

eHealth

priorities and strategies
in European countries



Fact sheet

Spain

March 2007

Towards the Establishment
of a European eHealth
Research Area





Spain

Strategic perspective

The national programme for the healthcare system in Spain is defined in the Plan for Quality in the National Health System, issued by the Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs. This Plan has six main action areas, twelve strategies, over 40 objectives and almost 200 proposed measures for improving the quality and cross-disciplinary effectiveness of the national health system. Its implementation is being conducted through collaboration among the regional governments, the healthcare professionals, the patients and the main social organisations.

The strategic goals of the Plan for Quality include improving citizen participation in their own healthcare, increasing patient safety through improved quality of care, intensifying healthcare ICT security by continuous assessment, and increasing the use of ICT by adapting the human resources policy to the changing service needs.

eHealth activities, called “Health on line”, are an integral part of Plan Avanza, the Spanish eGovernment strategic plan for 2006 – 2010. The Plan Avanza was published in 2005. It aims to coordinate the policy objectives and activities of the various regions of Spain with those formulated at the European level in the strategic framework i2010 – European Information Society 2010.

Digital Public Services (“Servicios Públicos Digitales”) is one of the five areas of performance identified in the Plan Avanza. This action area addresses new measures focused on improving the services of the public administrations, increasing the quality of life of the citizens and the efficiency of companies. This action line is directly relevant for eHealth. In particular healthcare professionals are specifically targeted in the dissemination activities for five projects: health identification card database, digital clinical record, ePrescription, telemedicine, tele-appointment and interoperability.

Spanish legislation addresses issues of data protection (1999) and telecommunications (2003), but does not yet



cover digital signatures and telemedicine or eHealth service provision. Relevant European directives have been taken into account. The legal authorities charged with legal oversight are the Spanish Data Protection Authority (AEPD), the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, the Interior Ministry and the Ministry for Public Administration.

Implementation perspective

Implementation of the Plan for Quality started formally on 1 January 2006. In addition some pilot initiatives were undertaken in 2005 to prepare the ground.

Within the national health system framework, the regional health authorities are also developing numerous initiatives for improving their healthcare services based on use of new ICT. eHealth services such as electronic health records, medical appointments through the Internet, ePrescribing, telemedicine systems and the patient health card are therefore being implemented – to differing extents – in all Spanish Regions.



Spain

Several initiatives to ensure nationwide interoperability of health systems are being developed by the Ministry of Health. For instance, web services were introduced for the National Health System in 2003, enabling the exchange of information and the integration of the various systems of the 17 Autonomous Communities (AC) health service organisations. These web services allow the exchange of information from the database of Electronic Health Card users, programmed derivation of the amounts required to compensate for patient flows between different ACs (via a compensation system defined by the Ministry of Health and Consumption called the “Fund of Cohesion”). They will also allow the exchange of electronic prescriptions and Electronic Health Records which ultimately support increased patient mobility. The web services exchange information by XML messages, enabling independence of platforms and applications.



The Ministry of Health is also seeking a consensus among health professionals about the content of various kinds of clinical reports and clinical record summaries.

Future activities

Plan Avanza runs until 2010. Accordingly, the current eHealth activities outlined above are expected to be continued and expanded to other provinces and regions. Throughout this period, applications, data fields, and functionalities will be dynamically adapted and further improved to ensure continued focus on achieving and maintaining interoperability across the services of different Autonomous Communities.

Core resources

Plan for Quality in the National Health System:

<http://www.msc.es/en/novedades/docs/PlanCalidadSNS.pdf>

Plan Avanza:

<http://www.planavanza.es/index.html>

About eHealth ERA

This fact sheet is the outcome of research in the context of the *eHealth ERA* project (Towards the Establishment of a European Research Area). The project is implemented by empirica GmbH (co-ordinating partner, Germany), STAKES (Finland), CITTRU (Poland), ISC III (Spain), CNR (Italy) and EPSRC (United Kingdom), based on a Coordination Action contract with the European Commission.

The European Commission, Directorate General Information Society and Media, supports this project to contribute towards greater transparency across Member States and other participating countries on eHealth strategies as well as innovation-oriented research and technology development (RTD) initiatives, including the coordination of Member States' eHealth strategy formulation and implementation.

The fact sheet is an excerpt from the report "eHealth priorities and strategies in European countries", published by the European Commission in April 2007. The complete report is available for download at http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3346.

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