Determining Health Care Technology Priorities during Health Policy Turmoil and System Changes

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Introduction

Colombia is nearing a political and technological crossroads characterized by an impending Health Care Reform. Concurrently, the state government identified health as strategic for regional development and promoted the strengthening of this sector to address the pressing health issues in the region.

To move forward during this health policy transition, a group of leaders from the public, private, and academic sectors, under the facilitation of the Chamber of Commerce, met to tackle the challenge. First, the continuum of health model was adopted as an stable platform to base health care delivery under most circumstances; then, the consulting firm HealthiTek Inc. was retained to resource and facilitate the design of a program with the objective of improving opportunities within the Continuum of Health care model to develop new products or enhance services to better serve the regional population.

Program Objective

To strengthen the competence of organizations participating in the program to identify and take advantages of opportunities for improving business or services as described in the “Continuum of Care” health model.

Sequence of workshops

1. Health Technology Management & Innovation
2. Healthcare Operations and Administration
3. Healthcare Economics and Finance
4. Implementation of Healthcare Models

The Simon Bolivar University, the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Learning Service (SENA) came together to define and fund the project.

This innovative approach of bringing together the academic, private, and public sectors to fund and define a health care improvement project was successful.

Forty leaders from regional public and private organizations attended. The invited audience included senior managers of health care organizations, clinical laboratories, pharmaceutical manufacturing, health service providers, and academicians.

In a highly participative environment (10) ten Project Profiles in technology, policy, and research were identified, developed, and are now ready for funding.

Results

The final program included four health care modules:
1) Health Technology Assessment and Innovation,

The first module, presented by the American College of Clinical Engineering (ACCE), focused on current status and trends of technology and interoperability as the backbone of the continuous care model. The second, and third modules, presented by HealthiTek Inc., addressed the running, financing, and sustaining of health care systems. The fourth module put it all together and focused the participants in leveraging all information and experience shared during the previous activities to design projects that address their issues.

The tangible outcome of this effort were specific viable and actionable projects to deal with health priorities in the community. Projects will be developed in a sample population of 200,000 lives, then scaled-up to the Barranquilla’s 2.5 million, and subsequently to the Atlantic Coast of Colombia.

This is a measurable success for the individual participants, the organizations represented in the program, and the region.

Conclusions

Two main conclusion can be drawn from this experience:

1. The committed cooperation of the academy with the public and private sectors is a winning strategy to address social and policy issues. This cooperation becomes particularly productive when applied to areas already recognized as strategic for development. In the present case, three main actors: Simon Bolivar University, Chamber of Commerce and Health State Secretary had been working for some years to strengthen the Health Cluster in the region.

2. A technology-based approach to identify and develop projects and proposals within the Continuum of Health care model, proved to stimulate multiple participant participation, and to create conditions to collectively benefit from political, social and technological crossroads. Additional to the identification and development of ten projects addressing multiple priorities, the gathering of diverse international and national players fostered the remarkably rapid creation of the IHE Colombian National Deployment Committee.

By-Product

Creation of Colombian National Deployment Committee

Sponsors
- Simon Bolivar University
- Caribbean Foundation for Biomedical Research
- Chamber of Commerce of Barranquilla