eHEALTH POLICY AND eLEARNING

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By

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INTRODUCTION

• eHealth as defined by WHO is “The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health”- source the Global Observatory for eHealth Report 2006

• eHealth tools include; telephony (mobile and fixed, electronic mail and digital technologies through - Radio, TV, Video, portable disc players and internet.

• The rapid expansion of the use ICT in other sectors already provides opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

• However eHealth poses many challenges related to the technology and health information among others

• To realize maximally the benefits of ICT use for health, the right policies, strategies, organization, resources and institutions need to be in place.
eHEALTH – Potential

Improving:

• Access and quality of health services; locally, nationally, regionally and world-wide while containing costs.
• Health services delivery and strengthening the health system
• Information management within the health systems,
• Diagnosis and quality care,
• Communication among health workers, and between health workers and the public, individuals and communities.
eHEALTH – Applications/Services

• Health Service management – administration.
  - HMIS for planning and decision making eg Human Resource, Finance, Pharmacy and Supplies,
    Hospital management Information Systems

• Tele-consultation, Tele-diagnosis (audio and Video)
  - EMR, EHRs

• Tele-education (distance education)

• Public Health – education, promotion, and disease prevention

• Disease Surveillance
eHEALTH – Developed and Developing Countries Experiences

• Australian telemedicine programs for remote areas
• Canada Health Infoway – online health information
• Health Management Information Systems; Data collection, processing and analysis and transmission using appropriate ICTs such as a computer, PDAs, email on the GSM network, telephone between lower health units and MOH.
• Telemedicine – teleconsultation and telediagnosis (audio and videoconferencing, telepathology and teleradiology, nationally and internationally)
eHEALTH – Initiating a National Programme in a Developing Country

Key steps include:

- **Country situation analysis for eHealth**
  - The Health System and Healthcare need
  - Enabling Environment: Legal and regulatory and institutional framework; national laws, policies and guidelines on ICTs etc
  - ICT Infrastructure and Information –structure
  - eHealth Capacity, Content, Funding Mechanisms and projects/initiatives

- **Policy and Strategy formulation.**
- **Policy implementation**
eHEALTH – Country Situation Analysis

eHealth Survey Process in Uganda

**Establishment of E-Health Governance Structures**
- Uganda National e-Health Steering Committee

**Stakeholder Identification**
- National & District Political Leaders
- MOH Technical Leadership
- Other Relevant Uganda Government Ministries
- Referral Hospitals & District & Sub-district health service providers
- Private Sector Orgs
- Uganda NGO & Civil Service Orgs
- Academia

**Constitution of Task Force to Perform Survey**

**Survey Process**
- Identification of Resources for survey
- Development of Survey Tools
- Recruitment & Training of Survey Assistants
- Pre-testing of Tool
- Execution of Survey
- Data Analysis & Report Writing

**Presentation of Findings for Stakeholder Review**

**Uganda e-Health Situation Report**
eHEALTH - Policy

• Widely consultative and participatory with involvement of all stakeholders to ensure ownership, shared responsibility successful implementation.

• Provides a framework for eHealth implementation by all stakeholders in collaboration with other sectors

• eHealth is in line with existing policies eg Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), National health Policy, Health Sector strategic Plan I & II and National ICT policy
eHEALTH – Policy Issues

- Policy objectives
  - Coordination and Collaboration,
  - Connectivity and Infra- and Info-structure,
  - Human Resource Development,
  - Content,
  - Provision of Health Information and Services
  - Financing Mechanism and Sustainability
  - Research
- Organisational Structures Institutional Framework
- Expected Cost and Benefits of the Policy
- Monitoring and evaluation
eHEALTH – Challenges -1

• Coordination is not easy due to fragmented donor driven projects leading to duplication, equipment incompatibility (Silos)
• Integration of ICT into budgets of the service delivery programs in the health system affecting sustainability
• Connectivity available even in remote areas but very expensive.
• Hardware like computers limited.
eHEALTH – Challenges - 2

- Very few ICT professionals/Technicians to maintain equipment and support/ train the users.
- Inadequate bandwidth and irregular power supply or lack of it.
- Regulatory framework to ensure confidentiality and win the trust of patients.
- Embracing ICT is a process of cultural transformation which takes place very slowly.
THANK YOU 4 LISTENING