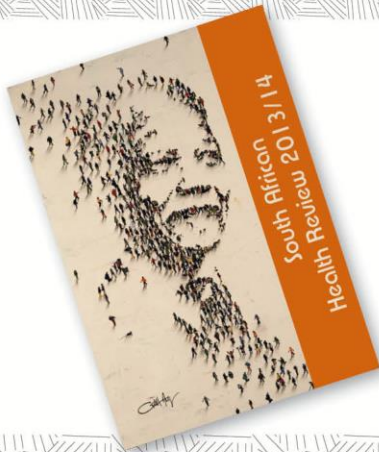




HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST



THE E-HEALTH STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICA 2012-2016: HOW FAR ARE WE?

SAHR KWIK SKWIZ SERIES

This KWIK SKWIZ:



summarises Chapter 2 of the 2013/14 South African Health Review.

- eHealth refers to improving the flow of information, through electronic means, to support the delivery of health services and the management of health systems.
- South Africa's eHealth Strategy was produced in 2012 and consists of 10 pillars or strategic priorities built around several targets with short-term timeframes.
- Since the publication of the strategy, progress has been made with respect to five strategic priorities, namely:
 - » Strategy and leadership
 - » Stakeholder engagement
 - » Standards and interoperability
 - » Governance and regulation
 - » Monitoring and evaluation
- Progress with the following five strategic priorities has been limited:
 - » Investment, affordability and sustainability
 - » Benefits realisation
 - » Capacity and workforce
 - » eHealth foundations
 - » Applications and tools to support healthcare delivery
- Implementation of the eHealth Strategy should be monitored consistently to ensure that the milestones attained are consolidated, and that barriers are identified and addressed early on.
- The acquisition of the requisite human resources, with technical expertise and ability to provide strategic leadership, is critical for steering the country towards the goals reflected in the eHealth sector. Greater investment of effort and resources is needed to accelerate progress with all pillars of the strategy.
- The World Health Organization cautions that: "The goal of a health information system is often narrowly defined as the production of good-quality data. However, the ultimate goal is more than this – it is to produce relevant information that health system stakeholders can use for making transparent and evidence-based decisions for health system interventions."
- Health information system performance should be measured not only on the quality of data produced, but on evidence of the continued use of the data to improve health system performance, to respond to emergent threats, and to improve health. Improving health information systems in terms of data

availability, quality and use often requires interventions that address a wide range of possible determinants of performance.

- To sustain momentum in the development and implementation of a national, integrated patient-based information system, finalisation and adoption of and compliance with the Health Normative Standards Framework and Interoperability Framework must be advanced.
- It is also imperative that the National Identity number be implemented as a Unique Patient Identifier for all users of public health services.

SOURCE:

Masilela TC, Foster R, Chetty M. The eHealth Strategy for South Africa 2012-2016: how far are we? In Padarath A, English R, editors. South African Health Review 2013/14. Durban: Health Systems Trust; 2014.

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HST welcomes comments on this publication.

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