

Overcoming Challenges When Introducing eHealth: The MOMENTUM Blueprint and Toolkit

FACING CHALLENGES

Telemedicine involves “the provision of healthcare services at a distance” to “help improve the lives of European citizens, both patients and health professionals, while tackling the challenges to healthcare systems”¹. Europe’s healthcare systems are facing four noticeable difficulties: socio-economic demands placed on healthcare as a result of the Union’s changing demographics; growing numbers of people with chronic diseases; increased demands from patients for more quality in the provision of healthcare services; and major shortages in healthcare personnel¹. Evidence shows that when telemedicine and innovative information and communication technologies are combined with proper organisation, leadership, and skills, they can provide significant benefits in terms of



Momentum Workshop in Kristiansand with the aim to achieve consensus regarding eHealth success and identify potential barriers.

improving healthcare services². In particular, the European Union’s Competitive and Innovation Programme was established to deal with these challenges and encourage the work of large-scale (and public sector) initiatives to scale-up electronically-based initiatives, including eHealth³.

MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM is an example of an initiative that aimed to create an understanding of the best ways to establish and scale-up telemedicine, telehealth, and telecare, and to explore good practices for mainstreaming telemedicine deployment in daily practice⁴. It focused on processes and procedures, not on any single form of technology.

MOMENTUM concentrated on addressing the needs of “telemedicine doers”, people actively involved in deploying telemedicine around Europe and beyond. These telemedicine doers include leaders in healthcare authorities, hospital managers, public administrators, clinicians, entrepreneurs, and business executives.

The MOMENTUM project was conducted with the support of a consortium of 20 organisations, including health professional associations, telemedicine associations, and competence centres. European stakeholder associations participating in the initiative represented healthcare professionals, healthcare organisations, telecare organisations, health insurers, and technology vendors. Participants originated from Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Israel and Norway also contributed to the project.



Diane Whitehouse,
eHealth expert,
EHTEL.



Marc Lange,
Secretary General,
EHTEL.

ABOUT EHTEL

European Health Telematics Association is engaged in supporting the transformation of the health care practice in Europe through eHealth. EHTEL provides 60 corporate members with a platform for information, representation, networking and co-operation. EHTEL offers expert advice and educational services to individuals and organisations working in the field of digital healthcare.

Correspondence:
marc.lange@ehtel.eu

Conflicts of interest: None

BOX: MOMENTUM'S 18 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Ensure that there is cultural readiness for the telemedicine service.
 - Come to a consensus on the advantages of telemedicine in meeting compelling need(s).
 - Ensure leadership through a champion.
 - Involve healthcare professionals and decision-makers.
 - Put the patient at the centre of the service.
 - Ensure that the technology is user-friendly.
 - Pull together the resources needed for deployment.
 - Address the needs of the primary client(s).
 - Prepare and implement a business plan.
 - Prepare and implement a change of management plan.
 - Assess the conditions under which the service is legal.
 - Guarantee that the technology has the potential for scale-up.
 - Identify and apply relevant legal and security guidelines.
 - Involve legal and security experts.
 - Ensure that telemedicine doers and users are "privacy aware".
 - Ensure that the appropriate information technology infrastructure and eHealth infrastructure are in place.
 - Put in place the technology and processes needed to monitor the service.
 - Establish and maintain good procurement processes.
-

MOMENTUM GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT

The MOMENTUM project identified 18 critical success factors considered vital for telemedicine deployment (see BOX). These became a set of guidelines called the MOMENTUM Blueprint. To arrive at these results, MOMENTUM analysed three case studies, as well as 25 other telemedicine services.

The three case studies all represent established services that support routine care:

- 1) The Intervention of Treatment of Hypertension Arterial in Catalonia (ITHACA) Programme provides telemedicine services for chronic hypertensive patients in the Catalonian region. It supports the work of local healthcare professionals.
- 2) The Maccabi Telemedicine Centre for Chronic Patients (MOMA) in Israel has reduced hospitalisations by lowering patients' depression and thereby helping them attain healthier lifestyles. Maccabi's doctors and nurses are pleased with its support services.
- 3) The Norwegian Teledialysis programme, with the remote support of a high-level tertiary care centre, enables dialysis patients to be treated in their own community. Local treatment allows patients, as well

as doctors and nurses, to avoid considerable travel, time, and resource demands.

To make the guidelines even more practical and ready for use by doers, the MOMENTUM Toolkit was developed for measuring the extent to which each success factor is present in a particular telemedicine setting. Through the use of this Toolkit, all 18 critical success factors are now featured in an online questionnaire survey, and the survey results are processed electronically.

The goal of identifying MOMENTUM's 18 critical success factors in an organisation's specific setting is to help doers develop their own telemedicine action plans. By using the MOMENTUM guidelines and building their own action plans, doers can achieve the deployment of telehealth in both routine care and on a large scale.

MOMENTUM TOOLKIT IN PRACTICE

The MOMENTUM guidelines and Toolkit now also serve as the basis for a series of facilitated workshops. The objective of a workshop is to perform a health assessment of a particular service's deployment processes. All key stakeholders in a telemedicine setting – such as healthcare services' chief medical officers, chief executive officers, and chief information officers, plus leaders in specialist medical areas (e.g., chronic diseases) – meet to-

gether. The workshop is designed to help achieve a consensus regarding their eHealth successes and to identify and overcome any gaps or potential barriers. Together with the relevant health/medical staff, the participants can build an agreed-upon action plan for deploying their telemedicine or eHealth service.

Within the project, a MOMENTUM workshop was successfully conducted in the municipality of Kristiansand, Norway, in the context of United4Health⁵. More recently, MOMENTUM has been used twice at the national level in Scotland. In April 2015, a MOMENTUM workshop was conducted with the country's Joint Improvement Team to perform a gap analysis or "health check"⁶. In September 2015, MOMENTUM was used to examine the kinds of business models that can emerge for telemedicine/integrated care in local Scottish settings in 2016-2020.

In the future, the MOMENTUM team looks forward to applying the MOMENTUM Toolkit in many other settings.

The project was completed officially earlier this year, in February 2015. Its project members continue, however, with other engagements and commitments related to MOMENTUM (e.g., the MOMENTUM workshop training described above). ■

For more information about MOMENTUM about the workshops held, see the MOMENTUM and EHTEL websites, or contact info@telemedicine-momentum.eu.



REFERENCES

1. European Commission. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on telemedicine for the benefit of patients, healthcare systems and society. /* COM/2008/0689 final */. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission; 04.11.2008. 14p.
 2. European Commission. Telemedicine for the benefit of patients, healthcare systems and society. Commission Staff Working Paper. SEC(2009)943 final. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission; 06.2009. 30p.
 3. European Commission [Internet]. Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Brussels, Belgium: European Commission; [updated 2015 09 03;cited 2011 11 30] Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/cip/>
 4. The Momentum Telemedicine Network [Internet]. European Momentum for Mainstreaming Telemedicine Deployment in Daily Practice. Brussels, Belgium. The European Health Telematics Association (EHTEL); [updated 2015 09 17 ;cited 2012 02]. Available from: <http://telemedicine-momentum.eu/>
 5. European Commission. [Internet]. United4health. European Commission; [updated 2015 09 17;cited 2015] Available from: <http://united4health.eu>
 6. European Health Telematics Association (EHTEL) [Internet]. Assessment of the Critical Success Factors for Mainstream Adoption of Technology-Enabled Care in Scotland. Scotland: European Health Telematics Association; [updated 2015 07 15;cited 2015 03]. Available from: <http://www.jitscotland.org.uk/resource/assessment-of-the-csf-for-mainstream-adoption-of-tec/>
-