

Transform Health asks for the G7 in 2021

Transform Health is a global coalition of organisations dedicated to ensuring that governments harness the power of digital technologies and data to support universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030.

Transform Health welcomes the UK Presidency's focus on building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has exposed **weaknesses of health systems** across the world, and further **exacerbated the digital divide** that prevents billions of people from accessing essential services, staying connected, and fully participating in the economy.

We welcome the inclusion of digital health within the priorities of the G7's Health Track. Across all countries and contexts there is **extraordinary potential to leverage digital technologies and data** to increase access to healthcare, build strong and resilient health systems, and accelerate progress towards UHC. This potential is not being realised because of **insufficient political will and resources** to reform health systems in ways that can maximise the use of digital technologies and data to respond to the health needs of the entire population. **Weak governance of digital technologies and data**, and underinvestment in the foundational building blocks for digital health such as ICT infrastructure, and digital literacy and skills is creating a divide between those people who can benefit from the latest digital health services and those who cannot. Furthermore, current approaches to digital health are not fully aligned to agreed global values and principles such as equity, human rights, and inclusion.

Through both its Health Track and Digital Technology Track, the **G7 has an opportunity to push for more equitable and inclusive digital transformations of health** and other sectors, both within G7 nations and globally. We encourage the G7's deliberations on digital health to extend beyond the role of technologies in supporting pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response to focus on maximising the contributions - and mitigating the risks - of digital for health and well-being more broadly. The G7 needs to support the drive towards accelerating the digital transformation of health systems, particularly in low and middle income countries (LMICs), to ensure they can deliver UHC. **This is the most effective bulwark against the spread of future pandemics.** The G7 is also strongly positioned to push for stronger governance of digital health technologies and data.

Recommendations

As part of a comprehensive effort to build back better after COVID-19, and to accelerate progress towards UHC and the Sustainable Development Goals, Transform Health encourages G7 members to work domestically and internationally to:

- 1** **Invest in digitally-enabled health systems** to achieve UHC, build resilience against pandemics and support LMICs to address bottlenecks in the implementation of national digital health strategies.
- 2** **Reduce the digital divide** within and between countries so that all people can benefit from digital health transformations. This can be achieved by investing in:
 - Connecting all health facilities, communities and households to reliable and affordable internet.
 - Equipping individuals, including health workers, with digital literacy and skills to effectively and safely use digital technologies.
- 3** Develop and adopt **global governance frameworks for digital health and data**. These frameworks should be developed through inclusive multi-stakeholder processes and guided by public values and principles such as equity and human rights.
- 4** Establish mechanisms for more **coordinated and effective international funding of digital health** in LMICs that aligns with aid effectiveness principles.

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