

The International Digital Transformation of Healthcare: Telehealth Development in the Global Community

Using advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), telemedicine and e-health are providing a means to transform systems of care for people throughout the world by providing greater access to clinical service, consultation, sharing knowledge, education and training, public and community health, health systems development, epidemiology and research.

Leap-frogging over prior barriers, rapid advances in information communication technologies (ICT), computing, and wireless networks are offering greater continuity in access to these services in both developed and developing countries. The use of telehealth must be put in the context of the critical health needs in each country, cultural perspectives, current and future communication infrastructure, other supportive resources, and likelihood for sustainability. Furthermore, these telehealth efforts should be aimed at improving the local capacity in providing ongoing health services in each country and blend into that country's current and future health care strategies.

As the world continues to “shrink”, developing this international telehealth “network of networks” offers an opportunity for cooperation, collaboration, knowledge sharing and improving the health of every individual in the world, applying information technologies for peace and the betterment of mankind. The time is now for open and constructive dialogue designed to facilitate that coordination between key stakeholders and other international organizations. These types of international exchange experiences enhanced with telehealth offer significant opportunities for understanding the common denominators, as well as unique differences, related to global health among countries and cultures around the world. These programs can promote international understanding and mutual respect in a manner th can improve the health of the entire global community.

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