FUTURESILIENCE Lab Policy Solution

FUTURESILIENCE lab
BAPEMED: Creating a resilient health care system

Policy Solution Title
Enhance Health Information Systems

Description
The policy aims to enhance health information systems (HIS): develop robust data collection and shared cloud infrastructure to be accessed by public and private actors to facilitate real-time monitoring and informed decision-making. It will address challenges in transparency and interagency coordination, critical for responding to health crises as well as over-reliance on private sector investments. Further increasing data governance the National Health Strategy 2030's focus on e-healthcare and digitization can be developed further.

Process
The solution was developed by testing policy recommendations from a **knowledge base** consisting of policy recommendations and R&I results against local conditions in Bulgaria. In order to create a robust policy, each Policy recommendation was tested against four different scenarios:

- Scenario A: Same old same old (Business as Usual),
- Scenario B: Private Sector Dominance,
- Scenario C: Climate- centric governance, and
- Scenario D: AI-Driven Healthcare Transformation in Bulgaria.

The selected policies were those policies that were deemed needed and applicable to the Bulgarian context. Working groups including key stakeholders and experts from the healthcare sector - one group per scenario, were asked to adjust the policies to local circumstances.

Purpose
The purpose of the policy to strengthen the capacity of the health sector to collect, manage, and utilize data effectively for timely decision-making, improved service delivery, and effective public health response. By strengthening data governance and developing a shared digital infrastructure, the policy aims to enable real-time monitoring, better-informed decision-making, and continuity of care across public and private actors. It addresses current barriers like fragmented data and lack of interoperability. The policy seeks to empower patients, support preventive care, and reduce over-reliance on private sector solutions, ensuring healthcare is more inclusive, efficient, and responsive to both health crises and long-term challenges like for example the climate change.

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Implementation

To implement the policy of enhancing health information systems in Bulgaria, a coordinated, legally grounded, and inclusive digital transformation is required. The first step is to establish a clear regulatory framework that give better conditions for telemedicine, create reimbursement mechanisms for e.g. telemedicine and ensures data privacy and sovereignty. Existing platforms like the National Health Information System must be upgraded to allow secure, two-way data sharing between patients and healthcare providers. A shared cloud infrastructure should be developed to ensure interoperability and real-time monitoring. Stakeholder engagement across the public, private, and civil society sectors is vital. Special attention should be given to protecting digitally vulnerable populations, building digital and AI literacy, and ensuring data is owned and controlled by the individuals who generate it. The tech sector's strength in Bulgaria is an opportunity to leverage while the political instability is a risk. Interagency coordination, funding reform, and cross-border learning will be essential to drive change and ensure equitable, resilient healthcare delivery.

Beneficiaries

Patients: They will gain better access to care through digital platforms, enjoy more personalized care, and benefit from faster, more informed medical decisions.

Healthcare providers (HCPs): Improved access to shared data will streamline workflows, support early detection and coordinate care. It will contribute to reducing patient service time and improving the quality of healthcare services. Enhancing health information systems (HIS) will help HCPs to deliver safer, more efficient, and more coordinated care. It will create fewer errors and reduce workload.

Public health system: Real-time data will enable quicker responses to health crises and better planning based on accurate insights and support a transition to preventive healthcare.

Researchers and policymakers: Access to structured good quality interoperable health data will support evidence-based decisions and innovation.

Society at large: More efficient healthcare delivery improves health outcomes and should decrease overall cost. It strengthened social resilience by using data to better withstand shocks, such as pandemics or disasters, contributing to societal stability and preparedness.

Climate governance: Better integration of health and climate data can provide insight into the true cost of a changing climate and inform adaptation strategies.

Potential losers:

Patients without digital literacy or access risk exclusion unless specific measures are taken to support them.

Institutions resistant to data sharing: Hospitals or providers unwilling to adapt to transparent, interoperable systems may face operational or financial challenges.

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