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02.6.1 Description of the initiatives and actions

Health care and all its associated services represent an area that has a considerable impact on the quality of life of a country. Health is a very important factor in Catalonia, first and foremost due to its relevance as a service for citizens, but also because of the strong tradition of health care and research, the economic weight of the pharmaceutical and chemical industry, and the importance of the health care sector in general (laboratories and technological centres for health research).

Catalonia on the Network seeks to improve the quality of care received by patients through the use of the Information Society Technologies and the incorporation into routine health care of the digitisation of various procedures, such as case histories, hospital quality associated with quality of management (digital repositories) and global management systems.

The new Health model is grounded on Medicine based on evidence, self-information on the part of the user, sustainability, efficiency, and training of professionals in the new technologies and changes.

The following may be defined as health care agents:

- Public health authority: Department of Health.
- Public insurance companies: Catalan Health Service (SCS).
- Private insurance companies: all
- Agents that supply all the products and services (hospitals, professional associations, private supply companies, etc.)

The aim behind the application of the proposed initiatives is to succeed in changing the role of the various agents and the knowledge of these agents. Up until now, information about the patient has been dispersed and compartmentalised, whereas medical knowledge about the patient in the future will be global and transparent, and will allow all the agents to share diagnostics based on the various records of the patient, resulting in improved diagnosis and treatment, and a better quality of service for the patient.

Initiative 1

Availability of a health care portal providing transparent access to all the public and private health organisations in Catalonia.

This initiative deploys a series of actions orientated towards making it easier for patients to gain access to information about health and health care. In short, a bridge will be developed to link the various information services concerned with health and the Catalan health system. The information to be made available to citizens will include specific information for training of both citizens and professionals.

Actions:

- Creation of a Catalan health care portal that provides access to a multitude of initiatives:
 - Information about the health care services and health system in Catalonia, which will be accessible to citizens and foreigners visiting Catalonia.
 - Access to health education material of two types: for citizens and for professionals.
- Parallel access to the information at the portal by means of the 012 public telephone service and other telephone services.

This series of actions will foster the availability on the network of databases of all kinds: pharmaceutical information, waiting lists, etc., public and private databases.

Agents:

Department of Health, Catalan Health Service, organisations of suppliers, users' associations, professional associations, Catalan Institute of Health, insurance companies, pharmacies, all the health care agents.

Reinforcement of electronic communication between all the health care agents

Telematic communication between the various health care agents demands a change in the type of communication to a form of communication between citizen and service that differs from the existing one. This will be based on the health card, which will no longer be a card that simply contains administrative data, but one that provides access to the holder's case history. This strategic line will essentially succeed in creating a global public health Intranet for Catalonia.

This line of action will include the following initiatives:

1. The Health Care Intranet.
2. The creation of a Health Care Information Agency.
3. The electronic health card and digital case history.
4. The digital case history.
5. Training and refresher courses in ICT for health care agents.

Initiative 2

Implementation of the Catalan health care Intranet, which will facilitate the exchange of case histories between the different organisations and professionals, and inclusion in the Intranet of the various public and private health care agents.

The undertaking of this initiative requires a consensus on the data interchange format (this may initially be similar to the hand-written medical reports), before finally reaching a consensus on a data interchange format with Web protocols (Web-EDI).

Action will be taken to ensure that future case histories are compiled through the contributions of all the public and private agents that have played a part in a patient's case history (the various insurance companies shall also participate). Furthermore, the Intranet and the data interchange procedures will have to offer guarantees with respect to security and confidentiality, while certifying who is to use specific information about the patient.

Broadband communications and the computerisation of both public and private health care agents are essential to this initiative.



Actions:

- Improvement of the quality of communications between the health care agents. The availability of broadband services is the only means of ensuring the interchange of health care data, images, results, etc.
- Boosting, updating and extension of the health care Intranet. This must involve:
 - Computerisation of the CAPs (Primary Health Care Centres), so that case histories may be transmitted/exchanged.
 - Inclusion of the public and private health agents in the health care Intranet, so that the entire chain of health services needed by the patient may be covered, ranging from the connection of the CAPs with the hospitals and the Social Security Department to the capture of data relating to pharmaceutical expenses with a medical prescription, or the insurance company charges.
 - Data interchange without a set format, advancing towards WEB-EDI.
- Implementation of a digital case history that can be personalised (relevant medical records). Objective: the case history of the patient is on the network and is shared and added to by all the agents.
- Global applications to "health care centres" as pilot tests that can be evaluated.
- Deployment of infrastructures that ensure the circulation of data with complete security, confidentiality, reliability and speed.

The case history model will be expandable and modular; initially it will contain a minimum of information that can be configured at each centre. The aim is to use open interconnection systems and not to insist on rigid standards, but ones that are similar to the present procedures on paper. There will be a need to gradually advance towards the interconnection and interchange of data via WEB-EDI.

Agents:

Department of Health, Catalan Health Service (SCS), organisations of suppliers, professional associations, Catalan Institute of Health (ICS), insurance companies, pharmacies, in short, all the health care agents.

Initiative 3**Creation of a Health Care Information Agency.**

The objective behind the creation of a Health Care Information Agency is to reach a consensus on the initiatives of the health care information network, including the actions of the health care agents (pharmacies and suppliers). Furthermore, this agency will have to support and guide the implantation of information technologies into the Public Health Service.

On the one hand, this agency will increase know-how, and on the other hand, it will be the entity that draws together all the information about this important sector. It will be a public agency, through which the quality of the specific services in progress will be evaluated, and it will help to undertake the following actions:

- To validate the information of all the agents without seeking to be interventionist.
- To define the quality of service criteria.
- To promote "a seal of service quality".

Actions:

- Creation of the Health Care Information Agency to support and guide the implantation of ICT services into the Public Health Service.
- Evaluation of the quality of the information on the network and of the services.

Agents:

Department of Health and Social Security as the creator of the Agency; the remainder of the agents will take part.

**Initiative 4****Introduction of the electronic health care card.**

The aim of this initiative is to create an infrastructure and to systematise access to information, in order to support the future smart card for health care identification. The health care smart card will be able to identify patients in the case of emergencies and to authorise the access of health care third parties to this information. The card will not hold detailed information about the patient, but it will serve as an element of identification if access to the patient's case history is required.

This action will be co-ordinated with the progressive computerisation of the Primary Health Care Centres (CAPs), where access will also be available to the case history.

Actions:

- Establishment of an electronic health care card, which, by identifying the patients, grants them access to the service and access to the personal data of their case history.

Both the implementation of the digital case history and the use of the health care card will guarantee the confidentiality of the data relating to the patient and the issuer of the prescription.

Agents:

Department of Health and Social Security for regulation, and all the health care agents for deployment.

Initiative 5

ICT training and refresher courses for health care agents.

Continuous training of all the health agents will be the key to the success of phasing in digital procedures in the area of health. Various measures will be introduced here, including a seal certifying continuous training for health care professionals. Standardised curricula will also be established, which will be open to public consultation. The ultimate objective is to foster changes in the study plans of the new professionals, in order that they include telematics and new technologies in medical studies, and to promote the continuous training of active professionals.

It will be necessary to rely on the collaboration of the users' associations, and in short, of all the organisations, when seeking to provide support and assistance for the weakest groups with respect to telematic access. This can be achieved by offering direct support at public points of access to the Internet (libraries, civic centres, interactive points in the hospitals themselves, Primary Health Care Centres, etc.). In this respect, it is also important to educate patients in preventive health care, encouraging them to show a new attitude towards the services offered by the health care service.

Actions:

- ICT training and refresher courses for agents within the Administration and professional health care agents and groups.
- Fostering of a change in habits regarding the use of ICT tools among professionals, through agreements with NGOs, the Red Cross and Recognised Professional Bodies.
- A commitment to electronic communication with healthcare suppliers.
- Guidance in new technologies, organisation of seminars, dissemination of model practices and the award of prizes for the "best practices".

Agents:

Recognised Professional Bodies, universities, insurance companies, NGOs, Red Cross, official associations.



02.6.2 Chart summarising the initiatives and actions

INITIATIVES	ACTIONS	AGENTS
Initiative 1 Availability of a health care portal providing transparent access to all the public and private health organisations in Catalonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Catalan health care portal that provides access to a multitude of initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about health care services and the health system. - Access to health education material for citizens and professionals. • Incorporation of emergency telephones. 	Department of Health Catalan Health Service Organisations of suppliers Users' Associations Professional associations ICS (Catalan Institute of Health) Insurance companies Pharmacies All the health care agents
Initiative 2 Implementation of the Catalan health care Intranet, which will facilitate the exchange of case histories between the different organisations and professionals, and inclusion in the Intranet of the various public and private health care agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the quality of communications between the health care agents. • Bolstering, updating and extension of the health care Intranet. This must involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computerisation of the CAPs with the global case history in mind. - Inclusion of the public and private health agents (covering the entire chain of health services): doctors, hospitals/CAPs, insurance companies, pharmacies. - Data interchange without a set format, advancing towards WEB-EDI. • Implementation of a digital case history that can be personalised (relevant medical records). Objective: the case history of the patient is on the network and is shared and added to by all the agents. • Global applications to "health care centres" as pilot tests that can be evaluated. • Deployment of infrastructures that ensure the circulation of data with complete security, confidentiality, reliability and speed. 	Department of Health Catalan Health Service (SCS) Organisations of suppliers Professional associations ICS (Catalan Institute of Health) Insurance companies Pharmacies All the health care agents
Initiative 3 Creation of a Health Care Information Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the Health Care Information Agency to support and guide the implantation of ICT services into the Public Health Service. • Evaluation of both the quality of the information on the network and of the services. 	Department of Health and Social Security as the creator of the Agency; the remainder of the agents will take part
Initiative 4 Introduction of the electronic health care card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the electronic health card, which, by identifying the patients, grants them access to the service and access to the personal data of their case history. 	Department of Health and Social Security for regulation, and all the health care agents for deployment.

Initiative 5		
ICT training and refresher courses for health care agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICT training and refresher courses for agents within the Administration and health care agents/professionals.• Fostering of a change in habits regarding the use of ICT tools among professionals, through agreements with the various organisations in the sector.• Electronic communication with healthcare suppliers, etc.• Guidance in new technologies, organisation of seminars, dissemination of model practices, etc.	Recognised Professional Bodies Universities Insurance companies NGOs Red Cross



02.6.3 Co-ordinator, moderators and members

Co-ordinator

Rt. Hon. Mr. Eduard Rius Pey

Department of Health and Social Security (DSSS)

Moderator

Mr. Carlos Padula Modorelli

Catalan Consortium of Hospitals (CHC)

Mr. Luis Alejandro Sorolla	Barcelona Regional Council
Ms. Roser Artal Rocafort	Catalan Health Service (SCS)
Mr. Josep Ma. Ayra Pascual	Assistència Sanitària Col·legial (Private medical insurance company)
Mr. Eudald Ballesta Carbonell	Catalan Union of Hospitals
Ms. Carmen Ceinos Kohn	ECOMIT
Mr. Xavier Companys Berges	Terrassa General Hospital
Ms. Mercè Cruells Salla	Co-ordinating Committee of Health Care Users (CUS)
Mr. Joan Duran Pou	Barcelona Association of Pharmacists
Mr. Isidre Fàbregues Aladren	Vall d'Hebron Hospitals
Mr. Pau Ferrer Salvans	Bellvitge Hospital
Mr. Josep Manuel Gil Meneses	Red Cross
Mr. Josep Gómez	Catalan Institute of Health (ICS)
Ms. Alicia Granados Navarrete	Medical Technology Evaluation Agency (AATM)
Mr. Antoni Gratacòs Bau	Technical Area. Department of Health and Social Security
Mr. Joan Grau Sociats	Corporació Sanitària Clínic (Clinical Health Corporation)
Mr. Santiago Marimón Suñol	Consortium of Hospitals of Catalonia (CHC)
Mr. Ramon Massaguer Meléndez	Department of Health and Social Security (DSSS)
Ms. Carmen Nuín Orrío	University School of Nursing (UdL)
Mr. Ignacio Orce Satrustegui	Collegial Health Care
Mr. Antonio Paredes Puigrodón	ADESLAS (private medical insurance company)
Mr. Josep Prat Domènech	Catalan Health Service (SCS)
Mr. Josep Roca Torrent	Hospital Clínic i Provincial
Mr. Ricardo Ruiz de Querol	Telefónica – Sector Solutions
Mr. Francesc Sánchez Montero	Corporació Sanitària Parc Taulí (Health corporation)
Mr. Ferran Sanz Carreras	Municipal Institute of Medical Research (IMIM)
Mr. Ramón Sarrias Ramis	Medical Association
Mr. Pere Torredadella Reinoso	Catalan Assocn. of Health Care Establishments
Mr. Jaume Tort Bardolet	Catalan Association of Municipalities (ACM)
Mr. Andreu Vidal	Department of Health and Social Security (DSSS)
Mr. Juanjo Villanueva Tipaon	Vision by Computer Centre (CVC, UAB)