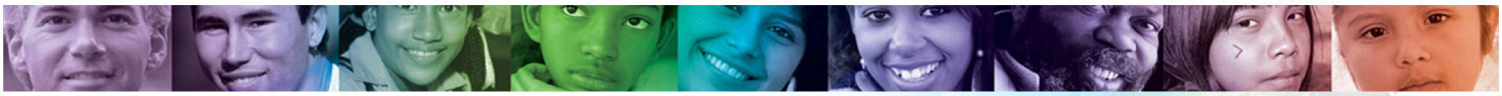

Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization

110 1902 - 2012

eHealth

eHealth uses information and communication technologies to improve outcomes and increase cost-effectiveness in health and health-related fields, including healthcare services, health surveillance, health literature, health education, knowledge and research. Among the most promising areas of eHealth are electronic medical/health records, teleHealth (including telemedicine), mHealth (using mobile devices in health), eLearning (including distance learning), continuing education in information and communication technologies, and standardization and interoperability. The Region of the Americas is the first WHO region to adopt a common eHealth Strategy and Plan of Action.

Key facts

- Mobile lines average 83 per 100 inhabitants in the Region of the Americas (ITU data)
- 45 percent of surveyed countries in the region report having an eHealth policy
- 82 percent report having legislation in place on the confidentiality of personal data
- 82 percent report using distance learning (or eLearning) in health sciences education
- 91 percent acknowledge using distance learning to train health professionals

Key PAHO actions

- Since 2011, PAHO has sponsored more than 100 activities related to eHealth, including projects, events, technical consultations and coordinating activities with other United Nations entities.
- Currently, PAHO is providing technical cooperation on eHealth in Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, USA, Haiti, Panama, Peru and the Dominican Republic.
- PAHO has established a regional eHealth laboratory as a venue for research, promotion, and discussion of objectives and strategies on the application of information and communication technologies to public health.

Regional eHealth strategy

PAHO member countries—through the regional eHealth Strategy and Plan of Action—have pledged to:

1. *Formulate, carry out and evaluate effective, comprehensive and sustainable public policies on the use of information and communication technologies in the health sector*
2. *Improve public health through the use of tools and methodologies based on innovative information and communication technologies*
3. *Promote and facilitate horizontal cooperation among countries for development of a digital health agenda for the region*
4. *Promote knowledge management, digital literacy, and education and training in information and communication technologies as key elements for ensuring the quality of care, supporting health promotion and disease prevention activities, and guaranteeing better access to information*