



Norwegian Centre for  
E-health Research

# Improving healthcare services through international collaboration and a multi-disciplinary approach

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# Norway – many rural areas

- Our research centre is in **Tromsø**
- Long distances and rural areas created a need for telemedicine, so people will have access to healthcare services – no matter where they live
- 2002: Designated by WHO as the **WHO Collaborating Centre for Digital Health and Telemedicine**





# What is a WHO Collaborating Centre?

- Over 800 WHO CC in over 90 countries worldwide
- We have delivered scientific evidence, been part of networks and given direct country support to e-health planning and strategies
- The joint work is of mutual benefit:
  - ✓ working together to strengthen healthcare systems
  - ✓ academic institutions are central to accelerate innovation in healthcare





## Some challenges:

- More elderly citizens living longer with complex long-term needs and noncommunicable diseases
- Increased need for care services – and the group is costly – accounts for 2/3 of high-level health care spending both in Norway and internationally ([G.K.R. Berntsen et al, 2019](#))
- Not enough health workers
- Tele-monitoring of chronic diseases is promising, for example diabetes and chronic lung diseases ([P. Walker et al, 2018](#))



# Stories of transformation

- **A short report:**  
“Use of e-health tools in primary health care in Norway during the pandemic.”
- Country vignettes from many countries were written to share experiences with how primary health care was strengthened.
- **Key findings:**
  - The importance of health literacy
  - More research in primary health care is needed
  - Electronic health record systems must integrate with each other

**World Health Organization**  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

**NORWAY** Transforming primary health care during the pandemic

**COUNTRY VIGNETTE**

**USE OF EHEALTH TOOLS IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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**MOTIVATION**

The digitalization of health services has been a key priority for Norway's Ministry of Health and Care Services in recent years. The Directorate of eHealth was established in 2016 and promotes a long-term strategy for eHealth. Included in the eHealth strategy is a specific roadmap (I) for primary health care. Together with government white papers, it embraces three main objectives set out for developing information and communication technologies in the health and care sector.

- Health professionals should have easy and secure access to patient and user information.
- Citizens should have access to simple and secure digital services.
- Data should be available for quality improvement, health monitoring, management and research.

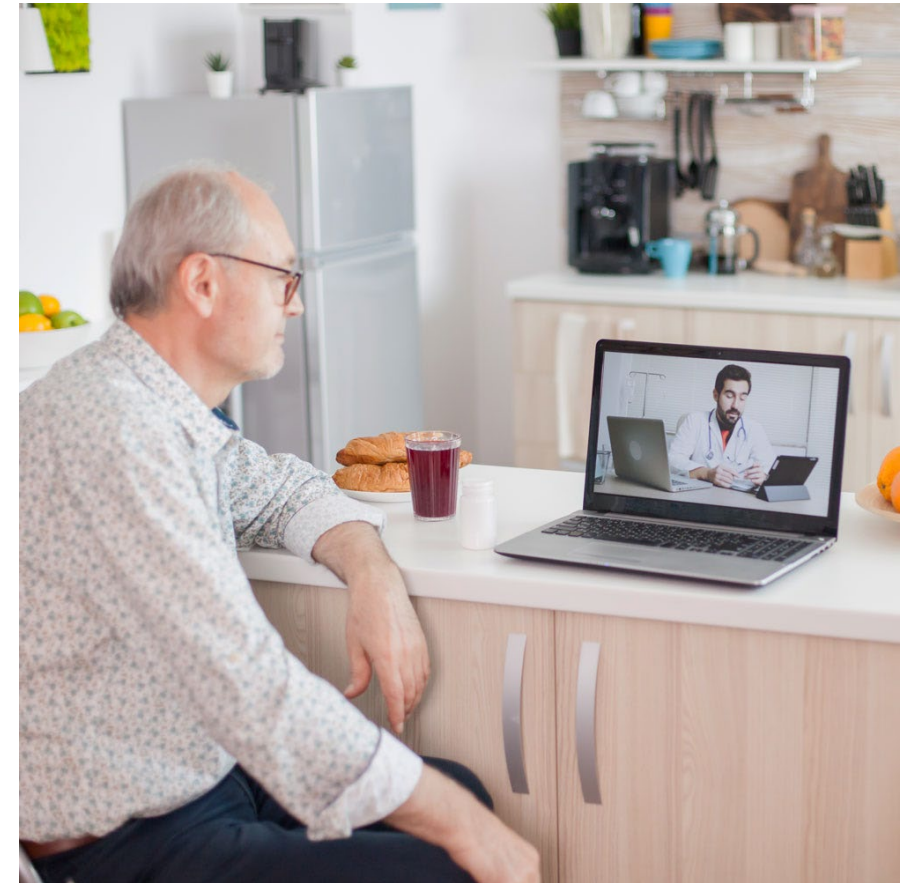
The urgent COVID-19 pandemic response has resulted in the acceleration and rapid deployment of digital technology across care levels. The Directorate has been responsible for steering and coordinating eHealth through close collaboration within Norway's various levels of health care: regional health authorities, local authorities, technical organizations and care providers.



# Primary healthcare

- The Covid-19 crisis demonstrated this:
  - ✓ Manage the extra needs for care
  - ✓ Maintain continuity of care for all
  - ✓ Much focus on scaling-up of *hospital capacities* – but it is not enough. We need to address all physical, mental and social health needs of people

(Source: Policy brief, OECD, 2021)





# Primary healthcare

- "Strong primary health care – organised in multi-disciplinary teams and
- ✓ innovative roles for health professionals
  - ✓ integrated with community health services
  - ✓ equipped with digital technology
  - ✓ well-designed incentives
- .... helps deliver a successful health system response."

[\(OECD policy brief, 2021\)](#)





# Towards proactive health and self-management



Full Flow of Health Data  
Between Patients and Health  
Care Systems



- How can we improve care based on better use of health data, user-participation, self-monitoring and data flow between the patient and clinicians?
- Patients with chronic health challenges want better answers...
- They take more responsibility for their own health self-management, with the help of apps
- In studies, patients are often asked about their experience with using technology – but we need to know more about what motivates them for behavioural change ([M. Bradway et al, 2020](#))





# Scaling up is hard to do – but...

1. Work interdisciplinary - break down silos
2. Get end-user input from the beginning
3. Use tested digital health solutions
4. Get joint ownership of what should be the solution
5. Person-centred perspective
6. Digital health literacy - training and motivation among health personnel and citizens



(Reference: [A.B. Labrique et al, 2018](#))



More info about all our projects  
on our website:

[Ehealthresearch.no/en/projects](https://ehealthresearch.no/en/projects)

Thank you!

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