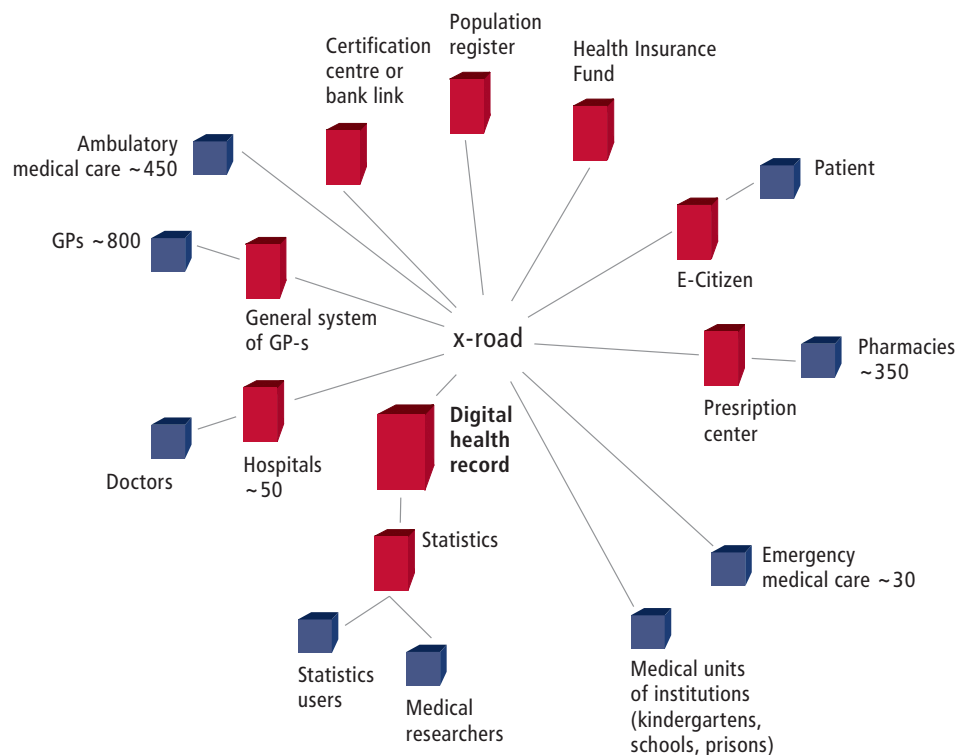


Estonia: National Health Information System – from institution-centered to patient-centered health care

In September 2008, the Estonian government implemented a National Health Information System in which health data – from birth to death – of all Estonian residents is to be collected. Personal data, information on diseases, diagnoses, therapies, etc. for every individual is saved in one central place, with links to existing databases. The aim is to facilitate information exchange between actors in the healthcare sector and to increase quality and efficiency of health care. The ambitious project is 85 % EU-funded.

Parties to the Health Information System



Source: E-Health Projects in Estonia © by Hansson, Leego & Partner

The main components of the National Health Information System are

- electronic health records (containing health information about every Estonian citizen)
- a digital appointment booking system
- an electronic prescription system
- a digital images database

From 2013, the system will become mandatory for all providers in Estonia.

System holds benefits for all stakeholders ...

- Health services will be provided more efficiently
- Patients are better informed about their health status
- Better coordination between providers
- Less bureaucracy for providers

... but still confronts challenges

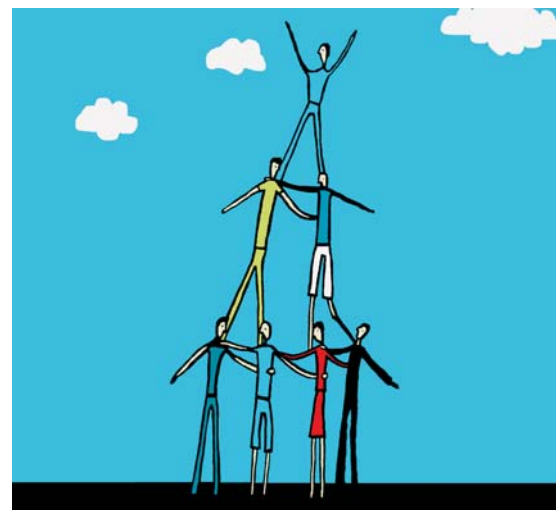
- Long-term financing is not yet secured
- Implementation capacity of stakeholders is limited
- Legal uncertainties still exist

Broad support for eHealth initiatives

- Technological advancement has always been high on the political agenda in Estonia. The country already possesses a sophisticated eGovernment system.
- The public strongly supports further developments in this area, expects more internet-based and other eHealth applications.
- A private, not-for-profit eHealth Foundation that consists of health care providers and professionals was founded in late 2007 and is responsible for implementation and further development of the National Health Information System.

Estonia – an innovation-friendly, investment-oriented country

- The Estonian case shows how a comprehensive data exchange system between different actors can be set up under public leadership in an overall climate of support.
- The Estonian health information system could serve as a model for regional, population-based, integrated care projects.



Full report:

Siret Läänelaid, Ain Aaviksoo: "National Health Information System in Estonia". HealthPolicyMonitor, April 2008. Available at www.hpm.org/survey/ee/a11/4

This and more reports can be found at the HealthPolicyMonitor web site: www.hpm.org

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