



22 January 2018

142nd WHO Executive Board Meeting , item 4.4 mHealth use of appropriate digital technologies for public health

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, which represents 9 million physicians around the world.

The WMA welcomes the Director General's report on mHealth.

We acknowledge that mHealth has the potential to supplement and further develop existing healthcare services and facilitate access to healthcare, improve patient self-management, enable electronic interactions between patients and their physicians.

Technological developments and their increasing affordability led to an exponential increase in the number and variety of mHealth services in use developed and developing countries. At the same time, this rapidly evolving sector remains largely unregulated and could have potential safety, quality and privacy implications. In order to still deliver high quality of care it is of utmost importance to put an emphasize on the education of health professionals, especially in regard to the shortage of health professionals.

As Physicians, we would like to stress the following;

-The WHO and member nations need to ensure that there are sufficient policies and safeguards to regulate and secure the collection, storage, protection and processing of data of mHealth users and assure the privacy and confidentially rights of them. We would like to refer to the WMA Declaration of Taipei on health data and biobanks.

- mHealth technologies used for services which require the medical expertise of physicians, such as SMS services providing advice to pregnant women or wearable sensors to monitor chronic conditions such as diabetes, frequently meet the definition of a medical device and should be subject to risk-based oversight and regulation with all its implications.

- The WMA enjoins the WHO to note the significant regional and demographic variations in the potential use and benefits of mHealth. The monitoring and evaluation of mHealth should be implemented carefully to avoid inequity of access to these technologies.

Thank you for your kind attention.