

INSIDE IS4H BAHAMAS: CONNECTING TO CHANGE

NO.1



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Issue 1

WHAT IS IS4H BAHAMAS?

Learn more about our transformative
“One Patient, One Record” mission in The
Bahamas.

WHAT IS DIGITALIZATION OF HEALTH INFORMATION?

Dive in as we explore the process and
benefits of improved digital connectivity
in health information

FIRST CONTACT: IS4H BAHAMAS PILOTS

Discover our new pilot projects in
partnership with Public Health



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BEHIND THE SCENES WITH IS4H BAHAMAS: LEADING THE DIGITAL HEALTH CHARGE

IS4H Bahamas is creating a new digital health information infrastructure, weaving new and existing health information systems together into a seamless, intuitive and user-friendly whole with the goal of “One Patient, One Record” in The Bahamas’ healthcare system.

And while IS4H Bahamas is working hard to digitalize access to medical information at healthcare facilities, public and private, around The Bahamas, it is so much more than that. According to IS4H Bahamas Focal Point, Acting Director of Public Health Dr. Phillip Swann (*below*):

“It is something much more impactful: it’s the setting of the national standard for how digital platforms support the delivery of healthcare. IS4H Bahamas is concerned with policy formulation and recommendation, and specifications for technology and equipment that will support that technology.”



A Security-First, Collaborative Approach

IS4H Bahamas operates with what Dr. Swann calls “a modern concept of data ownership and related responsibilities”. From this initiative will come recommendations and explicit draft legislation on treatment of patient information.

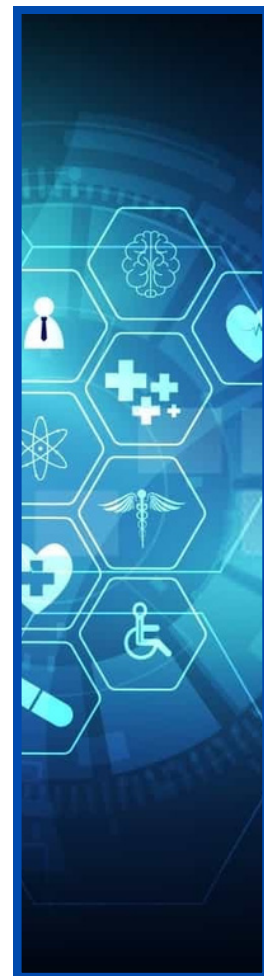
Partners include the Ministry of Health and Wellness, DPH and the Data Protection Commission, the National IS4H Steering Committee, government ministries and departments, public and private sector boards and commissions and various education and international research institutes and partners.

In other words, the development of digital health information systems is being conducted in a way that will work for everyone connected to the health system in The Bahamas.

THE IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON HEALTH INFORMATION

In the context of health information exchange (HIE), **digitalization** refers to using digital technologies and tools to improve and transform healthcare processes, services and outcomes. It encompasses a wide range of applications and innovations that use technology to improve patient care, increase the efficiency of healthcare delivery and advance government health policy and medical research.

To fully appreciate the digitalization process in relation to HIE, it is important to appreciate that **health information exchange** refers to the mobilization of health care information electronically across organizations within a region, community or hospital system.



Among the areas positively impacted by digitalization in HIE are:

- **Quality Control:** The quality control of massive data collected can help improve patients' well-being and reduce the cost of services.
- **Innovation:** Digital technologies will allow experts to devise new training methods, new treatment methodologies, and those technologies will vastly improve the participation of patients in the process of providing health care.
- **Collaboration:** Digitalization helps providers communicate with each other, share health information, and devise treatment plans collaboratively.
- **Patient Empowerment:** These technologies give the patient the ability to participate in the decision-making regarding their health care. Accessing their own information online or using digital health applications (e.g., via mobile phone) is essential for the patient to make the right decision about their health.

In short, digital tools significantly increase access to health data and give patients greater control over their health. The result is increased efficiency and improved medical outcomes.

TESTING THE FUTURE: NEW HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE TOOLS

Not A Sprint, But A Marathon

While the pace of the action has ramped up over the last 12 months, the race to smart and useful health information digitalization in The Bahamas has not been a sprint, but a marathon.

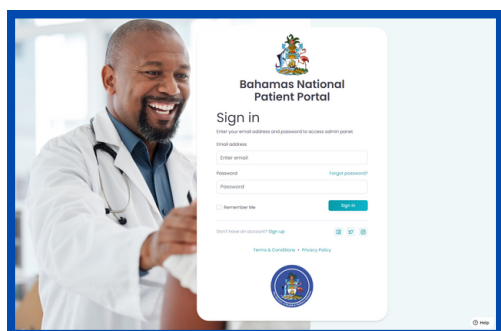
Dr. Phillip Swann said:

“The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is among the first countries in the region seeking to digitize in a way that makes sense. We want to be the first that crosses the finish line. Our compass is not just regional but global as we are among the first set of SIDS (Small Island Developing States) making this bold step.”

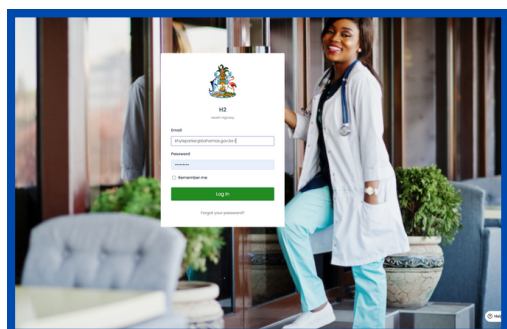
In July 2024, IS4H Bahamas launched a raft of new apps in pilot projects to ensure that the digital architecture supporting the new HIE system works as intended in the real world. During this first phase of implementation, the apps are being tested by personnel in Mental Health Counseling Services, Nutrition Counseling Services and the CNCD (Chronic, Non-Communicable Diseases) Screening Unit.

The data from this testing period will guide further development of the applications, refining their usability and perfecting their performance before widespread adoption.

We have launched the following public-facing apps in Phase One:



The **Bahamas National Patient Portal (BNPP)**: Health professionals from the CNCD, School and Community Health Screening Units, and School Health Clinics, are now able to document digitally instead of using paper, increasing efficiency and improving patient care with real time reporting, patient referrals and follow up.



PatientLink Bahamas: Health professionals at our various health facilities will be able to better manage patients care via digital appointments. Doctors and patients will receive confirmation and reminder emails and text messages, providing greater accountability from the paper-based appointment logbooks.

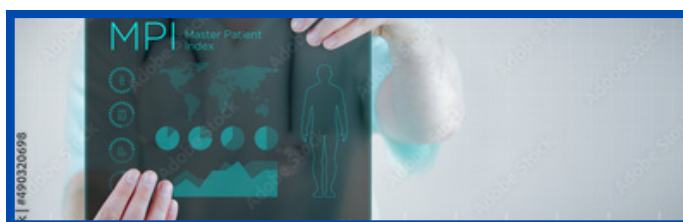
UPDATES

As of July 2024, the following apps have been launched as part of Phase One of IS4H Bahamas implementation:

- A **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)** app, which facilitates multi-factor authentication for increased data and information security;



- A **Master Patient Index (MPI)**, which collects all patient information and is the building block of the eventual electronic health record (EHR), and



- A **business intelligence tool (BIT)** which pools all the data from across the applications to allow for improved reporting, more detailed and customizable analysis and more data-driven public policy making



- **Moodle Learning Management System (LMS)**, which will give public health personnel access to dynamic courses that will continuous training and professional development. Moodle will also enable training and continuous learning to be accessible to the Family Islands.



3 QUESTIONS: INTERVIEWS WITH IS4H BAHAMAS

MOIKA ROLLE-MOSS, IS4H BAHAMAS TRAINER

1. WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN WITH THE TRAINING PROGRAM?

MY EXPERIENCE WITH TRAINING HAS BEEN REWARDING. SINCE JOINING THE PROJECT. OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, I HAVE NOT ONLY TRAINED THE MEDICAL RECORDS AND SENIOR NURSING STAFF IN DIGITAL SKILLS, I HAVE ALSO GAINED A GREATER APPRECIATION FOR THE OVERALL VISION OF THE M.O.H.W. IN ADVANCING HEALTHCARE.

2. WHAT DO YOU ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE FOR THE DIGITALIZATION OF HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE TRAINING THE PARTICIPANTS?

I ANTICIPATE THAT OUR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO WILL ENTER A NEW AGE IN THE DELIVERY OF HEALTHCARE. MORE FULLY DIGITALIZED HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE COULD POTENTIALLY BE THE BRIDGE TO THIS NEW ERA. I AM HAPPY TO BE A PART OF IT..

3. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU THINK THE PUBLIC SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IS4H BAHAMAS?

WE ARE A DYNAMIC TEAM OF BAHAMIANS WORKING DILIGENTLY TO ADD VALUE TO HEALTHCARE IN THE BAHAMAS THROUGH VARIOUS DIGITIZATION INITIATIVES.



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