

# Transforming Healthcare: Bridging Digital Maturity, Health Data, and Global Policy\*

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## ABSTRACT

The session “Transforming Healthcare: Bridging Digital Maturity, Health Data, and Global Policy,” held at the DigiHealthDayS-2024 in Pfarrkirchen, Bavaria, Germany, examined how digital transformation can create measurable value in healthcare. Hosted by Angela Ahrendt (FTI Consulting) and Armin Scheuer (Lemonmint), the session featured a keynote by Hal Wolf (HIMSS) and contributions on digital maturity in healthcare, digital health literacy and the European Health Data Space (EHDS). Discussions emphasized the role of data-driven decision-making, interoperability, and policy frameworks in shaping a sustainable digital health ecosystem. The session underscored that true innovation emerges when technology, policy, and strategy align to enhance patient outcomes and system efficiency.

## KEYWORDS

Digital health, healthcare innovation, digital maturity, European Health Data Space, interoperability, global health policy

## 1. Introduction

The DigiHealthDayS-2024 in Pfarrkirchen, Bavaria, Germany, brought together global health leaders, policymakers, and digital transformation experts for a session exploring the intersection of digital maturity, health data, and policy. Moderated by Angela Ahrendt (FTI Consulting) and Armin Scheuer (Lemonmint), the discussion featured a keynote by Hal Wolf (HIMSS) and presentations by experts on critical elements of digital health transformation. The session highlighted the challenges and opportunities in achieving meaningful innovation through strategic investment, governance, and digital literacy.

*\*DIALOGUE @ StMGP – Global Digital Health: From Bavaria to the World. And Back. Hosts: Angela Ahrendt (FTI Consulting, Germany) & Armin Scheuer (Lemonmint, Germany). Featured Keynote by Hal Wolf (CEO of HIMSS, USA): “Transforming our Health Ecosystem”. Featured Keynote by Dr. Georg Münzenrieder (StMGP): “Digital Health Close to the Patients: The Bavarian Approach”. Panelists: Hal Wolf (HIMSS), Dr. Georg Münzenrieder (Bavarian State Ministry of Health, Care and Prevention [StMGP]), Ryan Dos Santos (WHO), Benedikt Aichinger (x-tention – principal sponsor).*

## **2. Key Considerations**

### **Hal Wolf: Data, Innovation, and System Transformation**

Hal Wolf opened the session with a keynote emphasizing the shift from data collection to actionable insights in healthcare. He noted that data itself holds no intrinsic value unless it informs clinical decision-making, operational efficiencies, and patient-centered outcomes. Wolf highlighted artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics as key enablers of a proactive healthcare system, stressing the importance of interoperability and governance in building a mature digital ecosystem. While his focus was global, he emphasized the necessity of scalable solutions that transcend regional boundaries: digital transformation must be driven by universal principles of efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability across diverse healthcare environments.

### **Angela Ahrendt: The European Health Data Space and Policy Implications**

Angela Ahrendt provided an overview of the European Health Data Space (EHDS), outlining its role in unifying health data across EU member states. She highlighted existing challenges, including fragmented national infrastructures, data privacy concerns, and regulatory complexities. Ahrendt underscored that the EHDS aims to facilitate both primary and secondary use of health data, ensuring that patients can access and share their information while enabling research and innovation. She stressed that implementation will require strong governance, standardized frameworks, and sustained investment, aligning with Bavaria's digital health transformation strategy.

### **Armin Scheuer: Measuring Digital Maturity for Sustainable Innovation**

Armin Scheuer discussed the importance of structured digital maturity assessments to guide hospitals through their transformation journey. He presented digital maturity models as tools for benchmarking progress and linking investment to measurable improvements. Drawing on findings from the DigitalRadar project, Scheuer emphasized the role of scientific methodologies, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation in driving sustainable digital health advancements. His discussion also referenced Germany's large-scale hospital digital maturity assessment as a model for other countries looking to develop targeted investment strategies.

### **Ryan Dos Santos: WHO's Perspective on Digital Transformation**

Ryan Dos Santos focused on the global implications of digital health policies, particularly in the WHO European Region. He addressed disparities in digital literacy, healthcare workforce readiness, and interoperability across different health systems. He emphasized that sustainable digital transformation requires responsible data governance, investment in digital competencies, and regulatory alignment to ensure equitable access to health technologies. Dos Santos also stressed the need for ethical AI applications and transparent digital health strategies to build public trust. He highlighted how digital health literacy is crucial to the adoption of new technologies and their integration into daily clinical workflows.

## **3. Future Directions**

The session provided several key recommendations for advancing digital health transformation:

- **Bridging Data and Decision-Making:** Healthcare organizations should prioritize actionable insights over raw data collection to drive meaningful system improvements.
- **Strengthening Digital Governance:** Policies must balance data accessibility with privacy and security considerations, ensuring compliance with frameworks like the EHDS and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

- **Investing in Workforce Development:** Digital literacy and upskilling initiatives should be a priority to equip healthcare professionals with the tools needed for effective digital adoption.
- **Advancing Digital Maturity:** Establishing structured digital maturity models will enable healthcare systems to track progress, optimize investments, and refine digital strategies for long-term success.
- **Enhancing Global Collaboration:** Cross-border initiatives and knowledge exchange programs can accelerate progress in digital health transformation, ensuring best practices are shared across regions.

#### 4. Conclusion

This session at the DigiHealthDayS-2024 demonstrated the tangible progress and strategic alignment needed to transform digital healthcare on multiple levels. By leveraging insights from Bavaria’s digital health initiatives, the European Health Data Space, and WHO’s global strategies, the discussions provided a comprehensive roadmap for implementing data-driven healthcare transformation. The speakers reinforced that sustainable digital health ecosystems require a combination of innovation, strong governance, and collaborative policymaking. The session highlighted that the path to true digital maturity is not merely about adopting technology but about ensuring its integration creates measurable value for both healthcare systems and patients.

#### References

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