

POLICY MAPPING ON EHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN **SPAIN**

This Country Factsheet was prepared for the eCAN Joint Action. It is prefilled with publicly available information and was sent for review to country experts on eHealth and cancer care. The Country Factsheet serves as the basis for the preparation of an overview of eCAN relevant policies and initiatives in all EU and EEA countries.

eCAN is a Joint Action (JA) of 16 partners in EU-Member States on 'Strengthening eHealth including telemedicine and remote monitoring for health care systems for cancer prevention and care'. eCAN aims to bring the benefits of eHealth to all citizens and patients across EU-Member States (MS) focusing on cancer prevention and care. There is a need to harmonize telemedicine regulations and to explore the efficacy of teleconsultation programs and telemonitoring in the cancer field.

This country factsheet has been **pre-filled** with publicly available information by

- Johannes Weiss, Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (Austrian National Public Health Institute)
- Anita Gottlob, Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (Austrian National Public Health Institute)

The pre-filled country factsheet was **reviewed** by

- Maribel Navarro Morales, Ministry of Health, Spain
- Rocío Fernández González, Ministry of Health, Spain

The country factsheet includes chapters on:

1 definition

2 governance

3 strategies/policies

4 legislation

5 cancer specific eHealth solutions

Any questions? – Please get in touch via ecan@goeg.at.

POLICY MAPPING ON EHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN SPAIN

1 DEFINITIONS

Table 1 : Deviations in the use of international definitions for eHealth terms - Spain

Term	Definition	Deviation
eHealth	The WHO defines eHealth as « the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health ». It also says that « eHealth is the transfer of health resources and healthcare by electronic means. » ¹	No deviation from definition. EHealth includes use of electronic health records, health information exchange, telehealth and personal health records utilization. ²
mHealth	« Mobile health (mHealth) is defined by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Observatory for eHealth as « medical and public health practice supported by mobile devices, such as mobile phones, patient monitoring devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and other wireless devices ». ³	No deviation from definition. ⁴
dHealth	The EU defines digital health (dHealth) and care as referring to « tools and services that use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and management of health-related issues and to monitor and manage lifestyle-habits that impact health ». ⁵ The WHO defines digital health as « the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health. Digital health expands the concept of eHealth to include digital consumers, with a wider range of smart-devices and connected equipment. It also encompasses other uses of digital technologies for health such as the Internet of things, artificial intelligence, big data and robotics. » ⁶	Digital health is not defined formally or legally in Spain. ⁷
telehealth	The WHO defines telehealth broader than telemedicine « as it includes computer-assisted telecommunications to support management, surveillance, literature and access to medical knowledge. » ⁸	Telehealth is not defined formally or legally in Spain.
tele-medicine	The EU Commission defines telemedicine as follows (EU Commission definition, COM(2008)689) : « Telemedicine is the provision of health care services, through the use of ICT, in situations where the health professional and the patient (or two health professionals) are not in the same location. It involves the secure	Telemedicine is not defined formally or legally in Spain.

¹ [6. eHealth, Factsheet for European Parliament \(who.int\)](#)

² HiT Spain, 2 2018, p. 78

³ World Health Organization *Frequently asked questions on Global Task Force on digital health for TB and its work.* [2017-02-27]. <http://www.who.int/tb/areas-of-work/digital-health/faq/en/> website. In *mHealth Assessment: Conceptualization of a Global Framework - PMC (nih.gov)*

⁴ [IJERPH | Free Full-Text | eHealth and mHealth Development in Spain: Promise or Reality? \(mdpi.com\)](#)

⁵ [Events - Smart4Health](#)

⁶ [Digital health EURO \(who.int\)](#)

⁷ [Digital Health Laws and Regulations Report 2023 Spain \(iclg.com\)](#)

⁸ [Telehealth – DigitalHealthEurope](#)

Term	Definition	Deviation
	transmission of medical data and information, through text, sound, images or other forms needed for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of patients. » ⁹	
tele-consultation	PAHO describes teleconsultation (also sometimes referred to as remote consultation or telehealth), as « interactions that happen between a clinician and a patient for the purpose of providing diagnostic or therapeutic advice through electronic means. » ¹⁰	UNE 179011 standard defines teleconsultation as: Health consultation provided remotely between health professionals and the patient and, where appropriate, their support person, through telematic media.
health app	Essén et al. 2022 define health apps as « a computer program or software application (designed to run on a mobile device) “intended to be used specifically for managing, maintaining, or improving the health of individual persons, or the delivery of care” (ISO https://www.iso.org/standard/78182.html (2021), p 5). »	Health app is not defined formally or legally in Spain.

2 GOVERNANCE

Table 2 : Overview on eHealth governance - Spain

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a Ministry or State Secretariat explicitly in charge of eHealth/dHealth? If so, which Ministry ?	Yes	The Ministry of Health is responsible for eHealth in Spain on the national level. In addition 17 regional authorities in the autonomous communities and cities (ACs) regulate and implement health policies in their region. In 2020, in addition a General Secretariat for Digital Health, Information and Innovation was established. ¹¹
Does the Ministry who is in charge of health care also have a specific Department or Unit in charge of eHealth/dHealth	Yes	The Directorate-General for Digital Health and Information Systems is established in the Ministry of Health. There is also an Electronic Department (Sede) in the Ministry of Health. It is the electronic access point to different services of the Ministry's management centres that require identification or authentication by citizens. The department has a series of services such as: its own electronic register, consultation of the list of procedures and means for the formulation of suggestions and inquires. ¹²
Is there a national eHealth governance board?	Yes	In 2021, the Interterritorial Council of the National Health System has agreed to create the Digital Health Commission aiming to contribute to co-governance with the Autonomous Communities. ¹³
Is there a public eHealth agency such as Elga GmbH in Austria or ANS in France? At which level (national,	No	No further information available.

⁹ Telemedicine – DigitalHealthEurope

¹⁰ <https://www3.paho.org/ish/images/docs/covid-19-teleconsultations-en.pdf?ua=1>

¹¹ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/pdf/Digital_Health_Strategy.pdf

¹² Ministerio de Sanidad, Consumo y Bienestar Social - Sede Electrónica (mcsbcs.gob.es)

¹³ Comisión de Salud Digital – Ametic

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
regional)? Which functions does this agency cover?		
Are dHealth / eHealth tools in the outpatient sector publicly paid or covered in your benefits package (e.g. by sickness fund or national health service). If yes, please describe how.	Yes, infrastructure, but regional differences for services	In principle telehealth services and tools can be covered within the public reimbursement system. It depends on the region which services are provided to the population free of charge. General eHealth services such as electronic prescription or Electronic Health Records are provided free of charge.
Are dHealth / eHealth tools in the inpatient sector automatically covered in your benefits package or do you need to pay extra (e.g. for telehealth consultations or telereha) compared to standard treatments?		
Are there any comprehensive cancer centres focussing on ehealth or telehealth treatments? If yes, which ones and for which specific fields?	No	No further information available.

3 STRATEGIES/POLICIES

Table 3 : Overview on strategies and policies for eHealth and cancer care - Spain

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a national eHealth strategy?	Yes	The Digital Health Strategy is the Spanish national eHealth strategy. ¹⁴
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting the national eHealth strategy?	Indicate	The Digital Health Strategy was elaborated by the Digital Health General Secretariat, was agreed to by the Digital Health Commission and approved by the Interterritorial Council, both bodies with representatives from all Spanish regions.
Are there regional eHealth strategies? If so, can you indicate whether in all regions or only some? Can you provide some (exemplary) documents ?	Yes	There are regional strategies for eHealth in Spain, relying on the national Digital Health Strategy's implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some regions have specific plans for eHealth.¹⁵ • Other regions have included e-Health in general Digital Transformation Plans.¹⁶
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting such regional strategy/ies?	Varies	It depends on the regions.
Are there strategy/ies explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	Yes	The Digital Health Strategy mentions eHealth in connection with cancer care in the light of European efforts: <i>'Thus, the European Data Strategy calls for the creation of a European health data space8, an idea that is also present in the Communication "Shaping Europe digital future" advocating that digitised</i>

¹⁴ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/pdf/Digital_Health_Strategy.pdf

¹⁵ Such as: <https://www.saludinforma.es/portalsi/estrategia-de-salud-digital>

¹⁶ Such as : <https://dgtic.gva.es/documents/85347/174021442/GEN+Digital+2025+castellano/8fc144b0-2c0a-4af5-a2d9-f514f8191c02>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<i>health records, collected in a European health data space, can lead to better treatment of major chronic diseases, such as cancer and rare diseases, but also to equal access to high quality health services for all people”¹⁷</i>
If not, are there discussions ongoing to develop a national eHealth strategy?	N/A	No further information available.
Is there a National Cancer Plan? And does it refer to eHealth?	Yes	There is a National Cancer Plan from 2009 ¹⁸ and an actualisation from 2021 (in Spanish). ¹⁹
In the light of the EU „Beating Cancer Plan” – are there any recent plans to update or modify existing plans? If yes, what is the timeline?	No	Spain has already integrated the Beating Cancer Plan in national strategy. ²⁰
Are there any indicators in eHealth policy or national programmes on cancer care measuring the progress of the use of eHealth in cancer care?	No	No further information available.
Are there any other cancer care specific eHealth initiatives, f.e. by other stakeholders than policy makers / public authorities?	Yes	Not at national level. Some regions have different initiatives like the Barcelona Health Digital Hub (BHH) to encourage and assist eHealth companies. ²¹

4 LEGISLATION

Table 4 : Overview on eHealth and cancer legislation - Spain

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How would you evaluate the current state of legislation of eHealth in your country in general?	N/A	No further information available.
Is there legislation on how to use telemedicine in general?	Yes	In general, competences for regulation of the health system are split between the national and regional levels. This requires definition of minimum requirements for implementation on the national level to be implemented by the 17 Autonomous Communities (ACs) responsible e.g. for ‘management of healthcare services, while the state retained competence over non-domestic healthcare and general coordination of the healthcare system’. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Spain telemedicine is regulated by Royal Decree 81/2014 of 7 February²², which refers to cross-border medical care. It is also

¹⁷ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/pdf/Digital_Health_Strategy.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/organizacion/sns/planCalidadSNS/docs/NHS_cancerStrategy.pdf

¹⁹ [Microsoft Word - ActualizacionEstrategiaCancer_2020_210224_CISNS.doc \(iccp-portal.org\)](https://www.iccp-portal.org/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20ActualizacionEstrategiaCancer_2020_210224_CISNS.doc)

²⁰ [Deployment of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan in Spain \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/Deployment_of_the_Europe's_Beating_Cancer_Plan_in_Spain)

²¹ <https://barcelonahealthhub.com/about-bhh/>

²² [BOE-A-2014-1331-C.pdf](https://www.boe.es/BOE-A-2014-1331-C.pdf)

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<p>mentioned in the Code of Ethics and in the Law on the Organisation of Health Services (Código Deontológico y en la Ley de Ordenación de las Prestaciones Sanitarias (LOPS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for the processing of health data, it is regulated by Law 3/2018 of 5 December and the European Parliament Regulation 2016/679. The use of Electronic Health Records is regulated in several legislations.²³
Is there legislation explicitly referring to cancer prevention?	No	No further information available.
Is there legislation explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	No	No further information available.
If yes, which of these legislation(s) do you consider most important in the context of eHealth and cancer care? And why?	N/A	No further information available.
If no, are there any particular reasons or barriers to the fact that there is no or only limited cancer specific eHealth legislation (i.e., discussions still ongoing, conflicting opinions or other).	Yes	Cancer is normally included in more general eHealth legislation.
What could be improved or would need to be done to improve these legislation for eHealth in cancer care in your country?	N/A	No further information available.

Further information:

- The UNE standards (UNE 179011 standard. Health services. Teleconsultation.) are normative documents created by the Technical Committees for Standardization (CTN) of the Spanish Association for Standardization (UNE) and whose main objective is to guarantee levels of safety and quality. The UNE standards are generally voluntary, unless a Law, Royal Decree or Regulation establishes that certain UNE is mandatory.

²³ [Interim Report prepared by Milieu Ltd for the European Parliament under Service Contract IP/C/PETI/IC/2008-042 \(europa.eu\)](#)

5 CANCER SPECIFIC EHEALTH SOLUTIONS

Table 5 : Overview on cancer specific eHealth solutions in use – Spain

Area of application/ type of solutions	Login Websites	Apps	Webinars	Multi-disciplinary teleconferences (HCP-HPC)	Teleconsultation (HCP-patient)	Telemonitoring via devices	Other, please specify
Ecosystem	Yes, e.g., use of electronic prescriptions, appointments, Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) ²⁴	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prevention of Cancer	Yes, e.g., Cancer screening program ²⁵ ; Healthy lifestyles ²⁶ ; European Code Against Cancer ²⁷ ; Cancer Plan ²⁸	-	-	-	-	-	Yes, e.g., digital media advertising campaign ²⁹
Treatment of Cancer	No	-	-	Yes, in some hospitals, health professionals exchange information through teleconferences, for example, in tumour	Yes, in the covid-19 pandemic, some hospitals established follow-up teleconsultations to reduce the risk of	-	-

²⁴ : Mahou, X.; Barral, B.; Fernández, Á.; Bouzas- Lorenzo, R.; Cernadas, A. eHealth and mHealth Development in Spain: Promise or Reality? Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 13055. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18241305>

²⁵ <https://www.sanidad.gob.es/areas/promocionPrevencion/cribado/cancer/home.htm>

²⁶ <https://estilosdevidasaludable.sanidad.gob.es/>

²⁷ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/enfLesiones/enfNoTransmisibles/docs/Codigo_Cancer.pdf

²⁸ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/organizacion/sns/planCalidadSNS/excelencia/map/codigoEuropeoContraElCancer/Espanol_Accesible.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.sanidad.gob.es/campañas/campanas21/CodigoEuropeoCancer.htm>

Area of application/ type of solutions	Login Websites	Apps	Webinars	Multi-disciplinary teleconferences (HCP-HPC)	Teleconsultation (HCP-patient)	Telemonitoring via devices	Other, please specify
				committees, or in the network of reference centres of the national health system (CSUR).	infection for cancer patients Currently, most hospitals have returned to face-to-face follow-up consultations for cancer care.		
'Living with cancer'	Yes, e.g., https://www.redescuelassalud.es/home.htm (cancer section)	-	Yes, some patient schools hold webinars targeted at cancer patients for health literacy	-	-	-	-
Rehabilitation from Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palliative Cancer Care	-	-	-	-	Yes, at regional level, some regions have teleconsultation programs to provide care 24/7	-	-

Table 6 : Number of eHealth solutions available and in use – Spain

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How many eHealth solutions (in the sense of medical devices and thus 'authority approved/certified') solutions are existing currently in your country in the context of cancer care/treatment?	N/A	The Digital Spain 2025 initiative foresees to empower patients with telemedicine tools, self-diagnosis and greater accessibility. ³⁰ Use of such solutions depends on the region: The Galician Health Service offers the mobile application "Sergas Móbil". In Andalusia there is a telemedicine platform for managing internal teleconsultations between primary care and hospital care professionals in use.
Is there a website or other information on solutions that are recommended to the public for use (e.g. a selection of health apps that are recommended to cancer patients or in general)?	Yes	There are several websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer screening program³¹ • Healthy lifestyles³² • European Code Against Cancer³³ • Network of health schools for citizens³⁴ • Vaccination program of the National Health System³⁵
Can you give an estimation on how the split between private and public apps are available? Give an estimate percentage of public solutions.	N/A	There are no official data.
How can providers and patients assess if the apps are reliable? Is there a certification or quality approval procedure in place? If yes, which kind of procedure?	N/A	There are no official data.
How many Health Care Providers use such solutions? Which sector uses rather which types of solutions?	N/A	There are no official data.

³⁰ [Digital-Spain-2025.pdf \(espanadigital.gob.es\)](#), p. 60

³¹ <https://www.sanidad.gob.es/areas/promocionPrevencion/cribado/cancer/home.htm>

³² <https://estilosdevidasaludable.sanidad.gob.es/>

³³ https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/enfLesiones/enfNoTransmisibles/docs/Codigo_Cancer.pdf;

https://www.sanidad.gob.es/organizacion/sns/planCalidadSNS/excelencia/map/codigoEuropeoContraElCancer/Espanol_Accesible.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.redescuelassalud.es/home.htm>

³⁵ <https://www.sanidad.gob.es/areas/promocionPrevencion/vacunaciones/home.htm>