

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

This Country Factsheet was prepared for the eCAN Joint Action. It is prefilled with publicly available information and was sent for validation 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

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The pre-filled country factsheet was **not validated** by contacted country experts.

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.

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1 DEFINITIONS

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

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.
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 ». ²	No deviation from definition.
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 ». ³ 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. » ⁴	No deviation from definition.
telehealth	The WHO defines telehealth broader than telemedicine « as it includes computer-assisted telecommunications to support management, surveillance, literature and access to medical knowledge. » ⁵	No deviation from definition.
telemedicine	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 transmission of medical data and information, through text, sound, images or other forms needed for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of patients. » ⁶	No deviation from definition.
teleconsultation	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. » ⁷	No deviation from definition.

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

² 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/> *webcite*. In *mHealth Assessment: Conceptualization of a Global Framework - PMC (nih.gov)*

³ [Events - Smart4Health](#)

⁴ [Digital health EURO \(who.int\)](#)

⁵ [Telehealth – DigitalHealthEurope](#)

⁶ [Telemedicine – DigitalHealthEurope](#)

⁷ <https://www3.paho.org/ish/images/docs/covid-19-teleconsultations-en.pdf?ua=1>

Term	Definition	Deviation
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). »	No deviation from definition.

2 GOVERNANCE

Table 2 : Overview on eHealth governance - Finland

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 Social Affairs and Health has the coordinator role and the overall responsibility for the national eHealth architecture. ⁸
Does the Ministry who is in charge of health care also have a specific Department or Unit in charge of eHealth/dHealth	Yes	At the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the steering function for information management is located in the Unit for Digitalisation and Information Management under the Department for Steering of Healthcare and Social Welfare.
Is there a national eHealth governance board?	Yes	The Department for Steering of Healthcare and Social Welfare is responsible for the general steering, planning and development of healthcare and social welfare in Finland. ⁹
Is there a public eHealth agency such as ELGA GmbH in Austria or ANS in France? At which level (national, regional)? Which functions does this agency cover?	Yes	Kanta Services produces digital services for the social welfare and healthcare sector at national level. ¹⁰ And, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare is responsible for planning, guiding and monitoring the electronic processing of client data in healthcare and social welfare and the related information management as well as the use and implementation of national information system services (Kanta Services) and joint national data resources specific to individual administrative branches. ¹¹
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	‘My Kanta Pages’ is a free service for citizens. ¹² Omaolo is a national online service for social welfare and health care. Omaolo is a free service for citizens as well. ¹³
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		In Finland, the costs of medical care are principally paid by the patient’s home municipality. Fees charged from patients are determined according to the Act and Decree on Client Charges in Healthcare and Social Welfare. ¹⁴

⁸ [E-health and e-welfare of Finland Check Point 2022](#)

⁹ <https://stm.fi/en/departement-for-steering-of-healthcare-and-social-welfare-oho->

¹⁰ <https://www.kanta.fi/en/what-are-kanta-services>

¹¹ [Guidance of information management in healthcare and social welfare](#)

¹² <https://www.kanta.fi/en/faq-my-kanta-pages-general>

¹³ <https://www.omaolo.fi/>

¹⁴ <https://www.hus.fi/en/patient/patient-guide/patient-fees>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
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?	Yes	<p>Several CCCs work on eHealth in Finland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helsinki University Hospital Comprehensive Cancer Center – Digital services (e.g., services for remote appointments, health monitoring)¹⁵ • Kuopio University Hospital Cancer Centre - Omavointi, OmaKYS (services for communication, monitoring)¹⁶ • TYKS Cancer Centre - Online services¹⁷ • FICAN West – Support to patients¹⁸

3 STRATEGIES/POLICIES

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

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a national eHealth strategy?	Yes	<p>There is a national eHealth and eSocial Strategy 2020¹⁹ and a document on 'E-health and e-welfare of Finland: Check Point 2022'.²⁰</p> <p>In addition, the 'Sustainable growth and well-being – Roadmap 2020–2023', a growth strategy for research and innovation in the health sector is available (in Finnish).²¹</p> <p>The Finnish Nurses Association has eHealth related strategies as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eHealth strategy of the Finnish Nurses Association 2015–2020²² • Finnish Nurses Association's Digital Social and Health Services Strategy (eHealth) 2021²³
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting the national eHealth strategy?	Various, preparation in working groups	<p>Approximately 50 people have taken part in the five working groups including professionals from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the social welfare and health care sector, • the field of information management, • management from municipalities and hospital districts, • representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, • the Social Insurance Institution, • the National Institute for Health and Welfare, • NGOs in the social welfare and health care sector,

¹⁵ <https://www.hus.fi/en/e-services>

¹⁶ <https://www.psshp.fi/en/omavointi>

¹⁷ <https://www.tyks.fi/en/patients-and-visitors/online-services>

¹⁸ <https://ficanwest.fi/en/for-patients/support-to-patients/>

¹⁹ <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/74459>

²⁰ <https://www.julkari.fi/handle/10024/145973>

²¹ <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/162564>

²² https://sairaanhoitajat.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/eHealth_RAPORTTI- ENGLANTI.pdf

²³ https://sairaanhoitajat.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/E-health-2021_.pdf

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trade unions and representatives of scientific associations.²⁴
Are there regional eHealth strategies? If so, can you indicate whether in all regions or only some? Can you provide some (exemplary) documents ?	Yes	<p>Regional initiatives include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform of healthcare, social welfare and rescue services²⁵ Finnish e-health services intended for citizens – national and regional development²⁶
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting such regional strategy/ies?	Various, policy/ decision makers and experts	The health and social services reform is being prepared as a collaborative effort between several ministries and experts in various fields. A ministerial working group will direct the implementation of the health and social services reform. A steering group and a monitoring group, as well as four sub-committees under the steering group, have been appointed for the health and social services reform. ²⁷
Are there strategy/ies explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	Yes	The strategy of the Cancer Society and the Cancer Foundation Finland refers to digitalisation. ²⁸ And definitions and guidelines including Principles applied in the collection of data are provided in a document on follow-up of access to cancer care. ²⁹
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?	No	While Finland does not have a national cancer plan, over the past decade the country introduced several policies to improve cancer prevention programmes, and invested in reducing risk factors – particularly tobacco and alcohol consumption. ³⁰ The Cancer Society of Finland provides for an Action Plan 2023 (in Finnish) referring to Digitization. ³¹
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?	Yes	<i>The time for a national cancer plan is now</i> (in Finnish)
Are there any indicators in eHealth policy or national programmes on cancer care measuring the progress of the use of eHealth in cancer care?	Yes	<p>There are indicators for the assessment of the impact of eHealth policy in general, e.g. in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the information system services in social welfare and healthcare³² Nordic eHealth Research Network³³ Finnish e-health services intended for citizens – national and regional development³⁴

²⁴ <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/74459>

²⁵ <https://soteuudistus.fi/en/frontpage>

²⁶ <https://journal.fi/finjehew/article/view/109778>

²⁷ <https://soteuudistus.fi/en/contact-information>

²⁸ <https://www.cancersociety.fi/organisation/strategy/>

²⁹ <https://www.julkari.fi/handle/10024/135751>

³⁰ EU Country Cancer Profile: Finland 2023

³¹ <https://www.syopajarjestot.fi/jarjesto/suomen-syopayhdistys/toimintasuunnitelma/>

³² <https://thl.fi/en/web/information-management-in-social-welfare-and-health-care/what-is-information-management-/follow-up-of-the-information-system-services-in-social-welfare-and-health-care>

³³ <https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/nordic-ehealth-research-network-nern?redirect=%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fthlfi-en%2Fresearch-and-development%2Fresearch-and-projects%2Fcurrent-research-and-projects>

³⁴ <https://journal.fi/finjehew/article/view/109778>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digi-HTA: Health technology assessment framework for digital healthcare services³⁵ National Development and Regional Differences in eHealth Maturity in Finnish Public Health Care: Survey Study³⁶
Are there any other cancer care specific eHealth initiatives, f.e. by other stakeholders than policy makers / public authorities?	Yes	There is the eCare for Me project. Its aim is to produce AI-assisted solutions for early disease detection, automated diagnostics and treatment selection, and comprehensive home care. ³⁷

4 LEGISLATION

Table 4 : Overview on eHealth and cancer legislation - Finland

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	Requirements for telemedicine providers are defined. ³⁸
Is there legislation explicitly referring to cancer prevention?	Yes	Several legislation refers to cancer prevention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governmental Decree on Screening 336/2011 Health Care Act Tobacco Act Other documents regulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising cancer screening³⁹ Development of cancer prevention, early detection and rehabilitation support⁴⁰ The cervical cancer screening programme in Finland⁴¹
Is there legislation explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	N/A	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).	N/A	No further information available.
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.

³⁵ <https://journal.fi/finjehew/article/view/82538>

³⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9419041/>

³⁷ <https://www.cleverhealth.fi/en/ecare-for-me>

³⁸ <https://www.valvira.fi/web/en/healthcare/private-health-care-licences/telemedicine-services>

³⁹ <https://cancerregistry.fi/screening/organising-cancer-screening/>

⁴⁰ [Development of cancer prevention, early detection and rehabilitation support in 2014-2025 - Part II of the National Cancer Plan](#)

⁴¹ <https://cancerregistry.fi/screening/cervical-cancer-screening/>

5 CANCER SPECIFIC eHEALTH SOLUTIONS

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

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., Kanta Services - (e.g., access to personal health record, electronic prescriptions); Maisa - social care and health care client portal of HUS Group, the city of Helsinki and the Uusimaa wellbeing services counties that use the Apotti client and patient system; Omavointi - conveys information related to illness and health to the healthcare professional; Fingenious - digital portal, which provides fast access to the high-quality specimens and biodata, including genome data, of Finnish biobanks	Yes, e.g., Kaiku Health - provides patient-reported outcome monitoring and symptom tracking; Mobile PSA – tool for prostate cancer follow-up	Yes, e.g., by Finnish Society of Telemedicine and eHealth	-	Yes, e.g., Medixine - communication, monitoring and collaboration tools for all parties involved in the care process	-	Yes, e.g., iCAN - translation of genomics and clinical big data into innovations; FICAN South - coordinates cancer diagnostics and care, and promotes cancer research in Southern Finland; BCB Health Platform - gathers real-world data on both medical effectiveness and treatment quality through an integrated proprietary platform; BC platforms - solutions for integrated healthcare data; Aiforia - platform and services for medical researchers, clinicians and pharmaceutical scientists working across different areas of oncology; Grundium – telepathology; MediSapiens - software solutions to clients in the biomedical field; Genevia Technologies – bioinformatics; OULU Health projects ; FinnGen project - utilises samples collected by a nationwide network of Finnish biobanks. The study is based on combining genome information with

Area of application/ type of solutions	Login Websites	Apps	Webinars	Multi-disciplinary teleconferences (HCP-HPC)	Teleconsultation (HCP-patient)	Telemonitoring via devices	Other, please specify
							digital health care data from national health registries.
Prevention of Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes, e.g., My+ screening - comprehensive service to manage the process of cervical cancer screening; Avenue Cancer Screen - screening process management software
Treatment of Cancer	Yes, e.g., Abomics - pharmacogenetics services	Yes, e.g., Noona - tool for monitoring patient's symptoms during cancer therapy; Buddy Healthcare - surgical care pathways; Popit - medication adherence	Yes, e.g., Adesante - comprehensive Virtual training and simulation centers for healthcare	-	-	-	Yes, e.g., Varian - radiotherapy software, cancer treatment solutions and cloud-based solutions to capture patient-reported outcomes; Aria - Oncology Information System
'Living with cancer'	Yes, e.g., Digital Health Village is a comprehensive digital service platform for healthcare developed together with patients, healthcare professionals, IT- specialist and patient organizations. The Health Village's services were created in the Virtual Hospital 2.0 project, coordinated by HUS, as a joint project for all university hospital districts in Finland; Cancer Hub at the Health Village (in Finnish)	Yes, e.g., Kindfull - patient support solution for home and healthcare providers and pharmaceuticals; Auntie - mental health support	-	-	-	-	-
Rehabilitation from Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palliative Cancer Care	Yes, e.g., Palliative at the Health Village (in Finnish)	-	-	-	-	-	-

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

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	No further information available.
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 is a list of applications for the Kanta Personal Health Record. ⁴²
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	No further information available.
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?	Yes	There is a list of applications for the Kanta Personal Health Record, including wellbeing applications. ⁴³ Tampere University has a vital role in developing a new quality standard for mobile health apps ⁴⁴
How many Health Care Providers use such solutions? Which sector uses rather which types of solutions?	N/A	No further information available.

⁴² [List of applications for Kanta Personal Health Record](#)

⁴³ [List of applications for Kanta Personal Health Record](#) and <https://www.kanta.fi/en/system-developers/kanta-phr>

⁴⁴ <https://www.tuni.fi/en/news/tampere-university-has-vital-role-developing-new-quality-standard-mobile-health-apps>