



COMMONWEALTH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

International conference on Non-Communicable Diseases and the role of Information, Communication Technology (e-Health & m-Health)

September 14 -16, 2012, Chennai, INDIA

Communiqué issued at the end of the Commonwealth Medical Association International Conference on Non-Communicable Diseases and the Role of Information and Communication Technology (e-Health and m-Health) held in Chennai , India from September 14-16, 2012.

The Commonwealth Medical Association (CMA) has held an International Conference on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and the Role of Information and Communication Technology in Chennai India from September 14-16, 2012. The conference was attended by National Medical Association representatives from 12 Commonwealth Member countries as well as officers from the Health Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Preamble

It is a known fact that NCDs such as Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and some Respiratory Diseases accounts for at least 70% of deaths globally and this exerts enormous drain on the healthcare system and the financial resources of countries, particularly low and middle income member countries.

The conference discussed the concepts of electronic health and mobile health which provide information about patients' health and clinical status, enabling data exchange, transmission, sharing, dissemination, inter-professional communication and health service delivery.

The conference reaffirmed that the e-health agenda is particularly important due to the chronic shortage of health care professionals and limited resources with the consequent negative impact on the management of non-communicable diseases in many countries.

The conference underscored the relevance of such important scientific forum of Commonwealth health professionals and particularly commended the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation for their continued and worthy collaboration with the CMA.

At the end of the conference deliberations participants adopted the following observations and recommendations:

Observations

1. That the CMA conference reaffirms the United Nations high level Meeting in 2011 recognizing the need for implementing ICT in Health (e-Health and m-Health) to improve the quality and accessibility to healthcare in member countries.
2. NCDs have become the major cause of death worldwide. This emerging threat is largely preventable with the right and efficient healthcare workforce backed by adequate resources and political commitment by governments.
3. The CMA conference recognises that there are different health needs in different groups of populations and ICT policies and strategies should reflect these.

Recommendations

1. Governments should formulate and implement policies and strategies favourable to the development of e-health and m-health.
2. Member countries need to adopt e-health and m-health policies that are tailored to their particular circumstances.
3. Governments should create appropriate legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks for e-Health and m-Health.
4. Adequate funding should be allocated by Governments and other stakeholders towards implementation of e-health and m-health products in their countries.

5. Governments should involve National Medical Associations, healthcare providers and all relevant stakeholders in the initiation and implementation of e-health and m-health policies in member countries
6. National Medical Associations should take the lead in advocacy, collaboration and research towards promoting e-health and m-health in their respective countries.
7. The concept of e-health and m-health should be incorporated into the curricula of medical and paramedical education and training.
8. In recognition of the importance of ICTs in strengthening health care systems, affordable and accessible ICT technology should be developed with user friendly and compatible software.
9. Public and private healthcare providers should collaborate in their work towards promoting e-health and m-health in their countries.

**ISSUED BY THE 2012 CMA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE THROUGH THE
COMMONWEALTH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION SECRETARIAT**

**Signed: Dr Oheneba Owusu-Danso
CMA Secretary**