

Medicus Mundi International

Meeting: Seventy-first World Health Assembly (A71/1)

Agenda Item: 12.4 mHealth

Statement:

Medicus Mundi International would like to take this opportunity to address agenda item 12.4. This statement is supported by the People's Health Movement.

We support use of new technologies, including mobile technologies to support universalization of health care.

However, we are concerned that the tone adopted in A71/20 is unduly optimistic. While there have been many pilot programs involving mHealth, we have undergone robust evaluations and that issues of scaling up and integration within health systems remain significant challenges. mHealth should not be seen as a low cost method of providing healthcare, and can be of real value only in situations where functioning health systems exist on the ground. Another area of concern is the close collaboration envisaged with ITU. ITU is a multilateral publicprivate partnership with a membership of 193 countries and almost 800 private-sector entities and academic institutions. PHM urges member states to enquire if the PBAC has satisfied itself that the relationship with the ITU does not breach the FENSA provisions and if not to request that it undertake such an enquiry.

Finally, we wish to point out that reliance on private actors puts into question accessibility to mHealth services for patients, as well as raises issues of data privacy and security. The creation of health data-bases opens up the possibility for insurance companies to use it to maximize their profits. The ability of governments to ensure localisation of servers and providers in their territory is essential for regulation, control and enforcement. Yet this ability is at risk through the recently signed TPP and other FTAs. Mobile technologies are an opportunity to strengthen health systems only if mHealth services are approached as a public good and designed according to the needs of all communities, and are used to support health systems that are present on the ground.