

POLICY MAPPING ON eHEALTH POLICIES AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ON CANCER CARE) IN SLOVENIA

This Country Factsheet was first prepared for the eCAN Joint Action and updated for the eCAN+ Joint Action. It is pre-filled 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.

The Joint Action ‘**Enhancing digital capabilities of cancer centres in Europe to improve prevention and care**’ (eCAN Plus) aims to bring the benefits of digital health to all citizens, patients and health care professionals to improve cancer prevention and care across Europe. The rising use of telemedicine and innovative legal framework of European Health Data Space offer opportunity to better address population health needs. Built on the experience of the eCAN JA, this project contributes to integrating digital tools and improving health data use for the benefit of cancer patients. The JA foresees to bring lasting impact to different targeted audiences. The project’s expected outputs pave the way for a wider rollout of **eHealth in oncology** but also supports decision-makers by providing recommendations and guidelines.

This country factsheet was originally **pre-filled in 2023/2024** with publicly available information by

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The country factsheet includes chapters on:

- 1 definitions**
- 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 - Slovenia

Term	Definition	Deviation
eHealth	The WHO defines eHealth as « cost-effective and secure use of information and communications technologies in support of health and health-related fields, including health-care services, health surveillance, health literature, and health education, knowledge and research ». ¹	No deviation from definition. ²
mHealth	« Mobile health (mHealth) is defined by the 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.
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 ». ⁴ 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. » ⁵	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. » ⁶	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, using 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. » ⁷	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. » ⁸	No deviation from definition.
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.

¹ WHO EMRO - eHealth

² <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZ/DOKUMENTI/O-MINISTRSTVU/Slovenija-E-zdravje-za-bolj-zdravo-druzbo-v2.pdf> (p106)

³ mHealth Assessment: Conceptualization of a Global Framework - PMC (nih.gov), mHealth

⁴ Events - Smart4Health

⁵ Digital health EURO (who.int)

⁶ Telehealth – DigitalHealthEurope

⁷ Telemedicine – DigitalHealthEurope

⁸ <https://www3.paho.org/ish/images/docs/covid-19-teleconsultations-en.pdf?ua=1>

Further information:

- The Central Registry of Patient Data (CRPD) is the national platform for storage and exchange of Electronic Health Records.
- Electronic Health Record (EHR) is defined as digital document/data record aimed to support provision of healthcare service. For the definition also refer to the proposal of the regulation of European Health Data Space.
- zVEM is a patient portal and mobile application available to all citizens of Slovenia.⁹

2 GOVERNANCE

Table 2 : Overview on eHealth governance - Slovenia

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a Ministry or State Secretariat explicitly in charge of eHealth/dHealth in place? If so, which Ministry?	Yes	The Ministry of Health (Ministrstvo za zdravje) is in charge. ¹⁰ The National Institute of Public Health (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje, NIJZ) is authorized by Healthcare Databases Act to develop and maintain the national eHealth system (see below).
Does the Ministry who oversees health care also have a specific Department or Unit in charge of eHealth/dHealth?	Yes	The Directorate for Digitalization in Healthcare (Direktorat za digitalizacijo v zdravstvu) is in charge. ¹¹
Is there a national eHealth governance board in place?	No	Slovenia has established a national eHealth governance structure, but not a single centralized "eHealth governance board" by that name. Instead, governance is coordinated through the Ministry of Health and supported by multi-stakeholder working groups.
Is there a public eHealth agency in place? At which level (national, regional)? Which functions does this agency cover?	Yes	The National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ) acts as public eHealth agency. It covers public health, national healthcare databases and management of the national eHealth system. ¹²
If no, are there any other public institutions working in the field of eHealth?	N/A	Not applicable.
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	The usage of the national eHealth system is covered within the universal coverage. Slovenia has a state health insurance service for the entire population (ZZZS – Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia). National eHealth system is available for the entire population irrespective of the insurance. The zVEM portal ¹³ allows users, i.e., patients to access their Patient Summaries and other healthcare documentation from the Central Register of Patient Data, eAppointments, eReferrals or ePrescription. eHealth services are available to all public and private healthcare providers and to all patients irrespective of insurance or payments.
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	Yes	There is no national telehealth infrastructure. Only telephone consultations are commonly used in inpatient sector. Slovenia's eHealth Strategy 2022–2027 aims to expand telemedicine and

⁹ <https://zvem.ezdrav.si/gost>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-zdravje/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-zdravje/o-ministrstvu/direktorat-za-razvoj-zdravstvenega-sistema/>

¹² <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/projekti-in-programi/ezdravje/> and <https://ezdrav.si/>

¹³ <https://zvem.ezdrav.si/en>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
telereha) compared to standard treatments?		ensure equitable access by integrating digital services into the national benefits package.
Are there any comprehensive cancer centres focussing on eHealth or telehealth treatments? If yes, which ones and for which specific fields?	Yes	<p>There are no specific centres focused on eHealth or telehealth treatments of cancer. National eHealth system is beneficial to support cancer treatments by supporting exchange of EHR and informing patients via access to EHR (patient portal and mobile application zVEM).</p> <p>In addition, the Central Registry of Patient Data is connected to the Cancer Registry¹⁴ enabling authorised controllers of the Cancer Registry to access EHR of the registered patients, facilitating collection of data to be recorded. Accordingly, the national eHealth system helps to improve integrity and quality of data in the Cancer Registry.</p> <p>Slovenia has cancer centers exploring eHealth and telehealth applications, particularly in teleconsultation and telemonitoring for oncology care. The leading institution is the Institute of Oncology Ljubljana with the digital health focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teleconsultations: Used for follow-up care, second opinions, and remote specialist access. • Telemonitoring: Pilots and initiatives are exploring remote symptom tracking and treatment adherence for cancer patients. • Digital imaging: Integrated into diagnostic workflows to support multidisciplinary teams.

Further information:

- No further information identified.

3 STRATEGIES/POLICIES

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

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a national eHealth strategy in place?	Yes	The 'Slovenia - e-health for a healthier society (REFORM/SC2021/061) Strategy of November 2022' is the national eHealth strategy and 'is implemented within the framework of the Support Program structural reforms (SRSP) of the European Commission. The project is intended the development of the e-Health Strategy and the investment plan, which will outline the goals and e-health development priorities in Slovenia for the period 2022-2027.' ¹⁵
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting the national eHealth strategy?	Several	Healthcare providers, policy makers and payers were included in the process.
Are there regional eHealth strategies? If so, can you indicate whether in all regions or only some? Can you provide some (exemplary) documents ?	No	No further information available.

¹⁴ <https://www.onko-i.si/rrs>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZ/DOKUMENTI/O-MINISTRSTVU/Slovenija-E-zdravje-za-boli-zdravo-druzbo-v2.pdf>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
If yes, which stakeholder groups have been included in drafting such regional strategy/ies?	N/A	No further information available.
Are there strategy/ies explicitly referring to / including eHealth cancer care?	No	No further information available.
If not, are there discussions ongoing to develop a national eHealth strategy?	No	A general digital health strategy is in place, not specific for cancer.
Is there a National Cancer Plan in place?	Yes	Yes, there is a dedicated National Cancer program in place (DPOR) ¹⁶ . The National Cancer Plan ¹⁷ does not specifically refer to eHealth.
If yes, does the National Cancer Plan refer to eHealth?	No	
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?	N/A	No further information available.
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, i.e. by other stakeholders than policy makers / public authorities?	No	No further information available.

Further information:

- No further information identified.

4 LEGISLATION

Table 4 : Overview on eHealth and cancer legislation - Slovenia

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there a general legal framework covering eHealth related topics in your country?	Yes	Healthcare Databases Act ¹⁸ and Healthcare Digitalisation Act ¹⁹ . Telemedicine is regulated generally in line with the regulations for the provision of health services in Slovenia by the Slovenian Health Services Act, Articles 1(3) and 3(3). However, a potential problem for the provision of telehealth services is Article 20 of the Slovenian Patient Right’s Act which stipulates that it is a patient’s right to have a doctor give an explanation whilst in direct contact with the patient. Telepharmacy is subject to the regulations set forth in Articles 4(1) (XVIII) and 6(1) (VI) of Slovenian Pharmacy Practice Act. Moreover, Article 19(2) (XVI) of the Slovenian Rules sets out the conditions for providing pharmacy practice. And there is a law about data collection in the field of healthcare. ²⁰
Is there specific legislation on the use of telemedicine?	No	

¹⁶ <https://www.dpor.si/drzavni-program/dpor-2022-2026/>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZ/DOKUMENTI/DJZ-Preventiva-in-skrb-za-zdravje/nenalezljive-bolezni/DPOR-2022-2026/Drzavni-program-obvladovanja-raka-2022-2026.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO1419>

¹⁹ <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO8996>

²⁰ <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO1419#>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
Is there specific legislation explicitly referring to cancer prevention?	Yes	Rules on cancer screening. ²¹
Is there specific legislation explicitly referring to / including eHealth in cancer care?	No	All public healthcare databases, including databases pertinent to cancer are described in Healthcare Databases Act and Healthcare Digitalization Act.

Further information:

- No further information identified.

5 CANCER SPECIFIC eHEALTH SOLUTIONS

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

Note: All healthcare providers are using national eHealth solutions for storage and sharing of electronic health records. Accordingly, cancer-related electronic documentation is shared nation-wide.

Cancer-related registries and databases have their dedicated ICT systems (e.g. Cancer registry, dedicated solutions for cancer screening). These systems are partially integrated with national eHealth. For example, colon cancer screening results are available within the national electronic health record system (Central Registry of Patient Data) and available to patients via patient portal. Also, the Cancer registry is connected to the Central Registry of Patient Data in order to obtain the available data on cancer patients. However, there is no cancer-specific eHealth solutions in place.

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prevention of Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Treatment of Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
‘Living with cancer’	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rehabilitation from Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palliative Cancer Care	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Further information:

- No further information identified.

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

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
How many eHealth solutions (in the sense of medical devices and thus ‘authority approved/certified’) solutions are existing	None	No solutions qualifying as medical devices. All healthcare providers are using national eHealth solutions (e.g. Central Registry of Patient Data, ePrescription, eReferral). There is currently a large national project ongoing to

²¹ <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV13531>

Question	Answer	Comments/Experience
currently in your country in the context of cancer care/treatment?		further expand digital health infrastructures, e.g. central system for storage and sharing of digital images (C_PACS).
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)?	No	All healthcare providers are obliged to use national eHealth system ²² . No specific eHealth solutions for cancer.
Can you give an estimation on how the split between private and public apps are available? Give an estimate percentage of public solutions.	No	Public eHealth solutions are available to public and private healthcare providers.
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	No further information available
How many Health Care Providers use such solutions? Which sector uses rather which types of solutions?	N/A	No further information available.

Further information:

- No further information identified.

²² <https://ezdrav.si/en/solutions/crpd/>