

The Future of Healthcare IT in the UAE: Key takeaways from the CxO Forum

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Michel Amous, Regional Managing Director for InterSystems speaking at the UAE CxO Forum

Technological advances are growing at an unprecedented rate, having significant implications on the healthcare industry in particular. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), healthcare is at the forefront of digital innovation, implications of which are expected to profoundly curb long-term healthcare costs, enable better health outcomes and empower both physicians and patients with access to real-time data. The healthcare market in the UAE is expected [to grow by over 8.5%](#) between 2018 to 2023, so demand for new facilities and technologies is higher than ever before. This week, over 300 stakeholders gathered at the UAE eHealth Week 2019 in Dubai to discuss the future of healthcare IT in the region at the UAE CxO Forum.

“If we are going to continue leading in the age of digital transformation, we have to understand the landscape and keep ahead of trends,” said **Dr. Mohamed Al Redha**, **Director of the Executive Office for Organisational Transformation, Dubai Health Authority (DHA)**. “As

patients are shaping the market, we as regulators always need to be two steps ahead and develop a comprehensive collaborative schedule that gives us foresight.”

Investing time, money and resources into healthcare technologies

And indeed, everyday technologies such as digital trackers, cloud storage and data analytics are playing a crucial role in propelling digitalisation in the UAE, attendees heard. The use of digital health will help in early disease detection and lead to behavioral changes that will ultimately reduce the cost burden on the local healthcare system. Digital advancements in telemedicine and remote monitoring will provide more accurate information on the clinical and economic performance of products, moving physicians towards tailored treatment. These will also allow for accurate and timely detection of disease, minimising wastage and reducing costs. Investing time, money and resources into healthcare technologies can ensure that healthcare providers in the region are able to build the underlying infrastructure to support long-term digitalisation.

“The healthcare funding revolution has developed tremendously over the past 10 years, moving towards efficient cost utilisation” said **Saleh Al Hashimi**, **Director of Health Funding at the DHA**. “Technology and precision medicine will be crucial in the efficient use of resources, allowing us to move towards health prevention and detection instead of treatment. Moreover, we will be able to use data and analytics from these technologies to plan better at the payer level.”



Dr. Mohamed Al Redha, Director of the Executive Office for Organisational Transformation at Dubai Health Authority speaking at the UAE CXO Forum

Several long-term trends are driving healthcare systems to move to a digitalised network, according to representatives from the DHA speaking at the event, such as the need for increased cybersecurity and compliance with local laws.

Today, most private healthcare organizations are looking at adopting the latest healthcare IT systems. They know that this will help them to provide safer, faster, and more efficient healthcare services. However, this could require a massive upgrade of their existing IT infrastructure and may involve huge upfront capital expenditure and

sizeable operating expenses. Investing in a cloud-hosted service mitigates the need to invest in IT infrastructure by providing access to hardware, computing resources, applications and services in a Pay-Per-Usage (PPU) fashion. This approach dramatically brings down the cost and simplifies the adoption and ongoing ownership of technology. A private cloud-hosted EMR solution such as TrakCare as a service which integrates data onto a unified system enables hospitals and clinics to achieve clinical, administrative and financial objectives without making major capital expenditures.

“We’re seeing explosive growth in the volume of big data within the healthcare sector, projected to grow faster than any other industry through until 2025,” said **Michel Amous, Regional Managing Director for InterSystems**. “Providers are faced with a real challenge to unify and simplify generated data, which can only be achieved through rapid and continuous innovation”.

Adopting these novel technologies, while exciting, will require a high level of coordination and commitment between various healthcare providers and government sectors to ensure the full benefits are achieved and sustained. But, through digitalisation, stakeholders will be able to harness and analyse data to reap health benefits and optimise the healthcare infrastructure throughout the region.

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