

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
Sixty-ninth Session  
Cairo, Egypt, 10–13 October 2022**

**October 2022**

## **STRENGTHENING HOSPITAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

### **Objectives of the event**

On 10 October 2022, a technical session will be held on strengthening hospital information systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The objectives of the event are to:

- increase understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of hospital information systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region; and
- develop a roadmap for strengthening hospital information systems in the Region to increase the efficiency, safety and quality of health care delivery, reduce inequalities in access and contribute to monitoring progress towards universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.

### **Background**

Together with primary health care facilities, hospitals deliver a significant proportion of the care and services that patients receive. As such, it is essential that hospital-related services (coverage) and health outcomes are measured and used to track progress against national and global health targets.

Recent developments in the health information system landscape provide opportunities which, if leveraged, can increase the efficiency, safety and quality of health care delivery as well as reduce inequalities in access to services and health outcomes. These opportunities include the implementation of electronic medical records, the availability (in some countries) of health insurance claims data, the potential to link clinical and service utilization data with other data sources (for example, census data measures of poverty and other socioeconomic indicators), and linking hospital information systems with clinical guidelines and clinical decision support tools.

Guidance on how to strengthen hospital information systems is currently limited in the public domain. Most software for hospital information systems is privately developed and the know-how on how to build a well-functioning system remains within the private sector. It is therefore important to develop technical guidance that is publicly available to countries in the Region. Hospital information systems are a key source of data on service coverage and health outcomes, and these data are needed to monitor progress towards universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs. There is a need to increase understanding of how to harness the value of this information source to inform policy and practice and to monitor progress on national health plans and global targets.

## **Challenges in the Region**

While there are examples of strong hospital information systems either at national level or in individual hospitals, a number of gaps remain to be addressed in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. There is limited integration and interoperability of data between sectors and levels of care; some countries do not use the International Classification of Diseases; other countries use the International Classification of Diseases but coding is poor; cause-of-death reporting is often poor or absent; and the information produced by hospital information systems is rarely used to improve performance or health outcomes. The private sector plays an important role in the delivery of hospital care in the Region and yet private hospitals report very limited data on burden of disease (mostly limited to reportable diseases) and their activities to the Ministry of Health, making national health indicators incomplete. Finally, countries in the Region are at very different levels of hospital information system development and therefore require tailored advice that takes their country-specific needs and resource availability into account.

## **Expected outcomes**

- increased understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of hospital information systems in the Region;
- development of a roadmap for strengthening hospital information systems to increase the efficiency, safety and quality of health care delivery, and to reduce inequalities in access to services and contribute to monitoring progress towards universal health coverage and the SDG targets.