Trust, innovation, solidarity: For a French vision of digital health (2020)

Background

After starting its work in January 2019, the French Digital Council's working group devoted to digital health was seized, in June 2019, by the Minister of Solidarity and Health, Agnès Buzyn, and the Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, Cédric O.

The report was published on Thursday 11 June 2020 and presented the same day to the Secretary of State for Digital Affairs and the head of the ministerial digital health delegation, Dominique Pon.

The report is structured around four themes:

- **A plea for a French and European digital health dynamic;**
- **The removal of obstacles to innovation in order to offer a genuine economic model and market to digital health companies;**
- **The need to place the Espace Numérique de Santé** (ENS - *Digital Health Space*) **and the Bouquet de Services aux professionnels de santé** (BSP - *Health Professional Services Package*) **at the centre of the French health system;**
- **Acculturation, training and support for users of national health platforms.**

Although the people interviewed were heard before the COVID-19 crisis, **the four axes presented in this report emerge from this crisis as all the more urgent to address.**

In each of the chapters developed, a re-contextualisation work has therefore been carried out, in order to contextualise our observations and proposals in relation to the tremors we are going through.

Recommendations

1. **A plea for a French and European digital health dynamic**

- **Reinforce the governance of digital health** by clarifying the roles of the institutions and the repartition of both strategic and operational management, while strengthening the central position of the patient, at the heart of the health system;
- **Successfully transition from a care system** (*système de soin*) **towards a health system** (*système de santé*), which requires rethinking of our financing system and re-evaluating the role of prevention;
- **Guarantee the interoperability and safety in information systems** in order to ensure both citizens and professionals support and confidence;

- **Promote a responsible vision of digital health**, which requires integrating ethics, digital inclusion and environmental responsibility to digital health policies.

2. **Lifting the brakes on innovation to offer a genuine economic model and market to digital health companies**

- **Rethink, in a decentralized way, the organisation of the innovation support structures network;**
- **Develop mechanisms designed to promote the participation** of citizens and health professionals in the innovation processes;
- **Reinforce the bridges between industry and research**, while ensuring respect for the latter's independence;
- **Accompany and train as soon as possible the researchers** who are willing to translate the results of their research into entrepreneurship projects;
- Assign the High Health Authority (*Haute Autorité de Santé*) an **advisory role in order to better accompany entrepreneurs** in their - sometimes complex - procedures with administrations;
- **Create a mechanism designed to streamline exchanges** between entrepreneurs, professionals and citizens involved in innovation, and policy makers.

3. **Putting the Digital Health Space (ENS) and the Health Professional Services Package (BSP) at the centre of the health system**

- **Rapidly generalize these tools at a national scale**, within a clearly defined framework, via a classification into three categories;
- **Extend the mandatory criteria that publishers must meet**, in particular those of medical utility and interest;
- **Set up a process of *a posteriori* control of applications** by the national authorities, while opening up a reporting and feedback space for platform users;
- **Ensure the acceptance of these platforms by users and health professionals**, meet their expectations and reinforce their trust by supporting the deployment of the ENS and BSP with communication focused on their users and by mobilising the structures closest to the field;
- **Make the ENS a digital health dashboard for citizens**, handing them control over their own health data, while ensuring their security;
- **Entrust the DNS with the task of formalising and standardising the conditions of access to health data** in the ENS and the BSP;

- **Allow individuals, through their ENS, to freely contribute to research projects they wish to support** by handing over their anonymised health data for analysis with full assurance the data is secure.

4. **Acculturing, training and supporting the users of national health platforms**

- **Develop digital health competence certificates**, on the model offered by the platform PIX;
- **Ensure support for those most excluded from the digital world;**
- **Complete this certification with specific tracks** designed for health professionals, mandatory in the initial training and with incentives for the already practicing professionals.

Methodology

The method used by the Council in drafting this report is based on the **logic of co-construction of realistic recommendations**. Simultaneously to a research phase, 75 people representing the sector studied were interviewed, and four panels were organised in Bordeaux, Périgueux, Paris and Épinal, totalling several hundred participants. This enabled the Council to gather the expectations of the main parties concerned.