

‘SmartCards’ as a Pivotal Tool for Pan-European E-Health Realization: TM Alliance Workshop Summary

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TM Alliance (TMA) 2010: A Personal Medical Network, represents a consortium of the European Space Agency (ESA), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), who, in cooperation with the European Commission, is trying to facilitate the formulation of an overlying policy for the application of telemedicine in support of, primarily, the European citizen by the year 2010.

The strategic goal is the improvement of public health and quality of life, adapting to changing needs and utilizing existing and new technological capabilities, while at the same time increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of these services.

The road towards this goal, with the first step taken within the framework of this project, is facilitating the use of innovative telecommunication and other information technology, crossing national boundaries and allowing functional interfacing between the currently widely differing systems to provide the citizen with seamless TM services throughout the EU, as well as creating a realistic plan for a pan-European functional and modern network.

TM-Alliance consortium recently organised a workshop “*Electronic Cards in Citizen Health Care*”, held in Barcelona 13-15 March 2003. This workshop served three purposes:

- To identify what for, for whom, how and the interoperability of electronic patients’ cards,
- to identify the conditions under which ‘SmartCards’ will work optimally as the central pivotal tool:
 - for realizing cross-border free movement of patients, being a co-requisite for the free movement of citizens across the EU, and

- for contributing to the full implementation of eHealth in all its aspects in Europe.
- To evaluate the type, magnitude and complexity of the difficulties of solving problems across borders, and, to investigate the methodology for other e-health telemedicine applications.

A summary of the results of this workshop, the next steps to be taken, and a vision of the ultimate goals will be presented.