European Connected Health Alliance Annual Report 2020
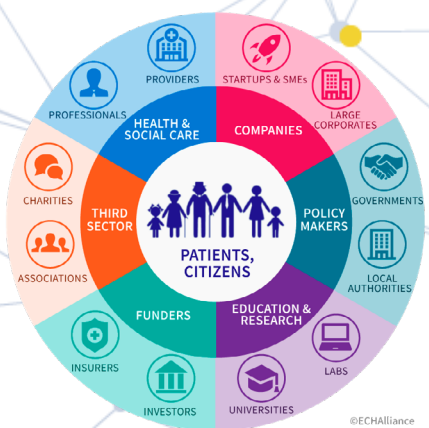
The Global Connector for Digital Health

A SPECIAL FOREWORD BY ECHALLIANCE CHAIR BRIAN O' CONNOR

The Global Connector for Digital Health

European Connected Health Alliance

the digital health **society**

enabled by ECHAlliance

digital health observatory

e m p o w e r e d   b y   E C H A l l i a n c e

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A Special Foreword

Dear all,

This report marks more than 10 years of creating and fostering collaborations across borders and silos.

We have learned a lot during that time. On occasions, we may have gone down the wrong road yet, despite that, we were able to accomplish so much. We forged an experienced team, created a global community, broke down many silos (though there are always more) and united many who shared the same dedication and enthusiasm as we do to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

However, enthusiasm and dedication are not enough. There needs to be light-touch organisation and processes with less bureaucracy to stimulate and propel innovative actions.

At ECHAlliance, we pride ourselves on providing that structure. Through our Global Ecosystem Network, we connect research institutes, governments, payers, providers, health insurance companies, community care groups, start-up and global industries, patient groups, economic development agencies and much more.

We collaborate on a daily basis with like-minded organisations who uphold our values and believe in the power of coming together to reach new heights.

As you will see in the 2020 Annual Report, we now have many allies and supporters in this task. We are humbled and thankful to everyone who continues believing in our efforts.

On a final note, I would like to leave us with one thought: there is no finish line. For that reason, we are committed to expanding and finding others who want to join the movement to make impactful and positive changes in health and care worldwide.

Kindest regards,

Brian O'Connor
ECHAlliance Chair

Brief Overview of ECHAlliance's Activities in 2020

2020 was a strange and, in some ways, difficult year. Many, including ourselves, had to adjust our way of operating because of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

This period had elements of shock, uncertainty and concern for our team, members and communities.

However, we were fortunate in that the ECHAlliance team had already adopted a remote working model. Apart from enhancing digital communication tools, we did not change much in our day-to-day activities.

Yet, we did implement one major change, which was to transition our ecosystem meetings from in-person encounters to virtual gatherings from March onwards. We called them "pop-up ecosystems", believing this virtual format would be temporary.

It was great to see the avid support from our Network, and we're grateful for their acceptance and understanding.

Interestingly, our Network was expanding rapidly before the COVID pandemic arrived. The desire of so many to be connected internationally only compounded that growth.

Similarly, in all of this commotion, there was a silver lining. The virtual format allowed us to be more effective in keeping communities together and having more available speakers. With no travel involved, more and more organisations and members from across the Network were able to participate and contribute to stimulating discussions and debates about digital health topics and more.

Beyond the pandemic, we must not forget that 2020 also experienced the leave of Great Britain from the European Union. While Brexit raised a great concern for many, we can gladly say that the ECHAlliance saw our membership grow both in the UK and Europe. It was evident that geopolitics aside, organisations and communities remained keen on maintaining and deepening connections in exchange for a more promising and prosperous future in health and care.

It is the culmination of all of this growth that the ECHAlliance Project team even expanded and welcomed more work. The wide membership base afforded us the opportunity to create high-quality, competitive consortia to bid for calls.

We also became more involved in events and ECHAlliance's input will continue to carry more and more weight in health-related matters.

Finally, we would like to highlight achievements made by ECHAlliance's Digital Health Society in 2020. The health data arm expanded its Board, set out a clear strategy, ran highly successful workshops and produced excellent Calls to Actions for recommendations to be presented before the EU Commission. Its November 2020 Virtual Summit attracted a unique audience from over 55 countries, and all shared an interest in the use of data. Lastly, it also featured contributions made by the German Presidency (which ended 20 December), the Portuguese Presidency (which started on 21 January) and the Slovenian Presidency (which starts on 21 July).

Evidently, 2020 marked a year of turbulence and radical changes across the board. Yet, as we have seen as well, it represented a grand possibility for growth, more open discussions and wider contributions from the ECHAlliance communities and members.

It's our hope that 2021 will bring us a year of more opportunities for stronger relationships and collaborations, as well as positive changes to our health systems, processes and much more.

Strategic Priorities for 2021

As we look towards the future, ECHAlliance presents three leading strategic priorities.

With these in mind, ECHAlliance will continue to position the organisation as both a leader in digital health transformation and major supporter of its members, ecosystems and communities.

Consolidating and deepening the international ecosystem network, its activities whilst developing new ecosystems in Latin America

Fostering Global Health Connector mission, relationships and activities

Building upon work performed by the ECHAlliance International Project team and Digital Health Society

Discover ECHAlliance - The Global Connector for Digital Health

ECHAlliance is a not-for-profit organisation, operating as a Community Interest Company (CIC) registered in the UK (Belfast, Ireland) and as a Company Limited by Guarantee in Dublin, Ireland.

Our global network of digital health alliances connects 78 countries and 8 billion people from Europe, the US, Canada, China, India, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

ECHAlliance in Numbers

78
countries

8 billion
people

16500+
experts

800+
members

9
EU-funded projects

60+
international ecosystems

Our community connects more than 16,500+ experts – including government, health and social care providers, leading companies and start-ups, researchers, insurance companies, patient groups and citizens, and the investment sector through ecosystem meetings (250 per year), international events and our online platform.

Our Mission

Provide Knowledge & Intelligence

We serve up news, reports, market surveys and insights, the latest technology solution trends, as well as business and research opportunities.

Influence

We work closely with the European Commission and national/regional government to influence Digital Health policies and strategies.

Connect & Network

We are a large community of 16,500+ individuals and 700+ member organisations consisting of patient/citizen groups, government & policy-makers, health & social care providers, companies, universities & research centres, insurers and investors.

Innovate

We support our members along their innovation process, finding unmet needs, user specifications and funders to get their product closer to market.

Implement & Scale Up

We have built a large International Digital Health Ecosystem Network, that can help identify best solutions; companies to commercialize as well as scale-up solutions.

Communicate & Disseminate

We promote the deployment of the Digital Health solutions by showcasing our member solutions on an international scene, through a proven set of web based communication tools and platforms specialising in social networks, as well as targeted events and workshops.

International

We can through our connections target on a global scale targeting 78 countries and 4.4 billion people globally including America, Canada, China, Latin America, Europe the Commonwealth and Australasia.

What Else?

ECHAlliance directs and provides guidance to:

the digital health society
enabled by ECHAlliance

The Digital Health Society (DHS) is a movement and a legacy of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2017. It works with interested EU Presidencies and multi stakeholders to promote digital health policies, services and products and focuses on health data and data management.

It has worked on a range of important areas including interoperability, data donation, legal frameworks and digital workforce transformation.

Learn more here.

digital health observatory
empowered by ECHAlliance

We are faced with numerous important challenges in the Digital Health Transformation. The Digital Health Observatory (DHO) aims to help in the transfer of knowledge and to facilitate collaboration between the professional community.

Together we can achieve better health services and a better quality of life for citizens and patients with the support of Digital Technologies.

Learn more here.

The ECHAlliance Board of Directors and Team

Brian O'Connor

Bleddyn Rees

George Crooks

Julien Venne

Richard Pengelly

James McLauglin

Andy Bleaden

Diane Nevin

Heather Smith

Karolina Mackiewicz

Valentina Tageo

Beatriz Sanz

Federica Porcu

Maite Arrillaga

Myriam Martin

Carina Dantas

Natalia Allegretti

Gregor Cuzak

Anthony Armenta

Peter Ward

Matthew Wintle

Marša Marušič

ECHAlliance Membership

Becoming a member of ECHAlliance gives organisations the opportunity to grow their networks, promote their names, connect with innovators in digital health and collaborate globally to transform health and social care.

At ECHAlliance, we are committed to creating and strengthening partnerships that drive positive change in both the quality and efficiency of health and social care. Our members enjoy access to an unrivalled level of insight and expertise, as well as unique knowledge and honest advice on local issues from a global intelligence network.

When organisations join ECHAlliance as members, they form part of a large and expanding group of stakeholders in digital health. In 2020 alone, ECHAlliance had more than 750 global organisations willing to share and exchange information, insights and collaboration opportunities.

Who Were Our Members in 2020?

During 2020, it became clear that many patterns characterised our membership and could offer valuable insights and opportunities for further learning and engagement. Of the 750 member organisations, more than 90% were either not-for-profit or government/public bodies. Such as:

Universities

Local Governments

Clusters

Economic Development Agencies or Networks

Hospital

Patient Groups

We also are very pleased to see that well over 75% of our members were from within mainland EU, highlighting once again that ECHAlliance membership includes multiple nationalities and countries. In a more detailed breakdown of our membership, by either category or region, we saw the potential of "connecting dots" in digital health and care.

Selection of Patient Group Members

ECHAlliance hosted more than 220 education or research organisation members. This figure represented an expansive academic group across the globe that could play compelling roles in ECHAlliance, including our ecosystems and European Union-funded projects.

We also had more than 120 hospitals or healthcare providers who could connect with the nearly 70 patient groups (ranging from either local or national to pan-European or global).

As 2021 unfolds, ECHAlliance will be tasked with showcasing needs and matching supply through the continuous connections of these networks, associations, charities and organisations.

Selection of Academic Members

What Services Did Our Members Enjoy?

ECHAlliance members are well-linked to their local ecosystems, and they join us for a variety of reasons (as can be seen in the diagram above). We help our members to promote their organisation, grow their network and access other ecosystems. We publish updates and news about their undertakings, achievements, events and more in our newly created Member-to-Member-Only Newsletter to raise awareness about needs, solutions and opportunities.

In 2020, we created this newsletter with the aim of connecting the dots between our network of members and encourage and foster collaboration. ECHAlliance shared information amongst members as a member-led opportunity and later across our wider network.

In the former, members can welcome exclusive connections; in the latter, members' news, updates or collaboration opportunities gain additional traction through a massive broadcast to 16,500+ connections and social media. This coverage translated into opportunities for ecosystems (which went online), and many members reported a spike in new members and, in particular, not-for-profit organisations.

We also revised our membership offering to reflect growing members' needs. We introduced a new category called Strategic Partnerships to enable those members who required more focused support and a stronger, ongoing relationship with ECHAlliance to target specific needs or markets.

We also revisited our membership application online to obtain the following advantages:

1. Simplifying the application process

2. Highlighting benefits obtained in each category

3. Quicker response time from ECHAlliance, including personal follow-up meetings with new members to discuss needs

2020 may have been a year of unprecedented events, but ECHAlliance is proud to report that membership rose dramatically to more than 750 organisations from across the globe. We implemented many changes to streamline processes and better match needs and supply where possible.

As we set our eyes on 2021, our aim is to build upon such momentum, continue breaking down silos in health and accelerate the digital transformation needed currently.

Our Current International Network of Ecosystems

ARGENTINA

AUSTRALIA – Melbourne

BELGIUM – Brussels
BELGIUM – Flanders

BRASIL

BULGARIA

CANADA – Quebec
CANADA – Ontario

CHILE

CZECH REPUBLIC

CROATIA

DENMARK – Southern Denmark
DENMARK – Scandinavia
          Nordic Health 2030

ENGLAND – Manchester
ENGLAND – North West Coast
ENGLAND – London
ENGLAND – Yorks/Humber
ENGLAND – South West Coast

ESTONIA

FINLAND – Oulu
FINLAND – Ostrobothnia
FINLAND – South Ostrobothnia
FINLAND – Kuopio
FINLAND – Central Finland
FINLAND – Helsinki

FRANCE – Bretagne
FRANCE – Nice
FRANCE – Normandy

GERMANY – Hess
GERMANY – Nuremberg
GERMANY – Rheinland

GREECE – Athens

HUNGARY

INDIA

ISRAEL

ITALY – Treviso

LITHUANIA

MALTA

MEXICO

NETHERLANDS - Friesland
NETHERLANDS - Health Valley

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORWAY – Smart Care Cluster
NORWAY – Health Care Cluster

POLAND

PORTUGAL – SHAFE Portugal
PORTUGAL – Digital Health
          Portugal

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

ROMANIA – Transylvania
ROMANIA – South West Oltenia

SERBIA

SCOTLAND – Highlands & Islands
SCOTLAND – Scottish Digital
          Health and Care
          Ecosystem

SLOVENIA

SPAIN – Extremadura
SPAIN – Valencia
SPAIN – Galicia
SPAIN – Catalonia
SPAIN– Basque Country

SRI LANKA

SWEDEN – Västerbotten

URUGUAY

USA – New York

WALES

What is an ECHAlliance Ecosystem?

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> **P**ermanent and geographically-focused, ECHAlliance ecosystems are multi-stakeholder gatherings that invite all key players involved in health and social care to accomplish three main objectives. ECHAlliance ecosystems break down silos that still exist in health, transform health and social care delivery, and boost economic growth.

At ECHAlliance, our ecosystems are unique in that organisations and members can connect with innovators and problem solvers at all levels, including worldwide. These ecosystems do not need compliments about the work being achieved. Instead, these ecosystems want challenges that are becoming of their abilities and expertise. They want to share existing knowledge and maximise opportunities to learn.

Beyond these underlying characteristics, ECHAlliance ecosystems aim to accomplish three different objectives:

To break down the existing silos in health and social care

To transform healthcare by concrete actions via promising need-solution matches

To recognise and boost economic growth potential in healthcare across regions

When ECHAlliance achieves these objectives for our digital health ecosystems, we foster "permanent" and mutually beneficial partnerships to improve healthcare delivery and provide economic benefits. Collaborations in ECHAlliance ecosystems work across many sectors and hold the potential to shape and secure a more prosperous future of healthcare.
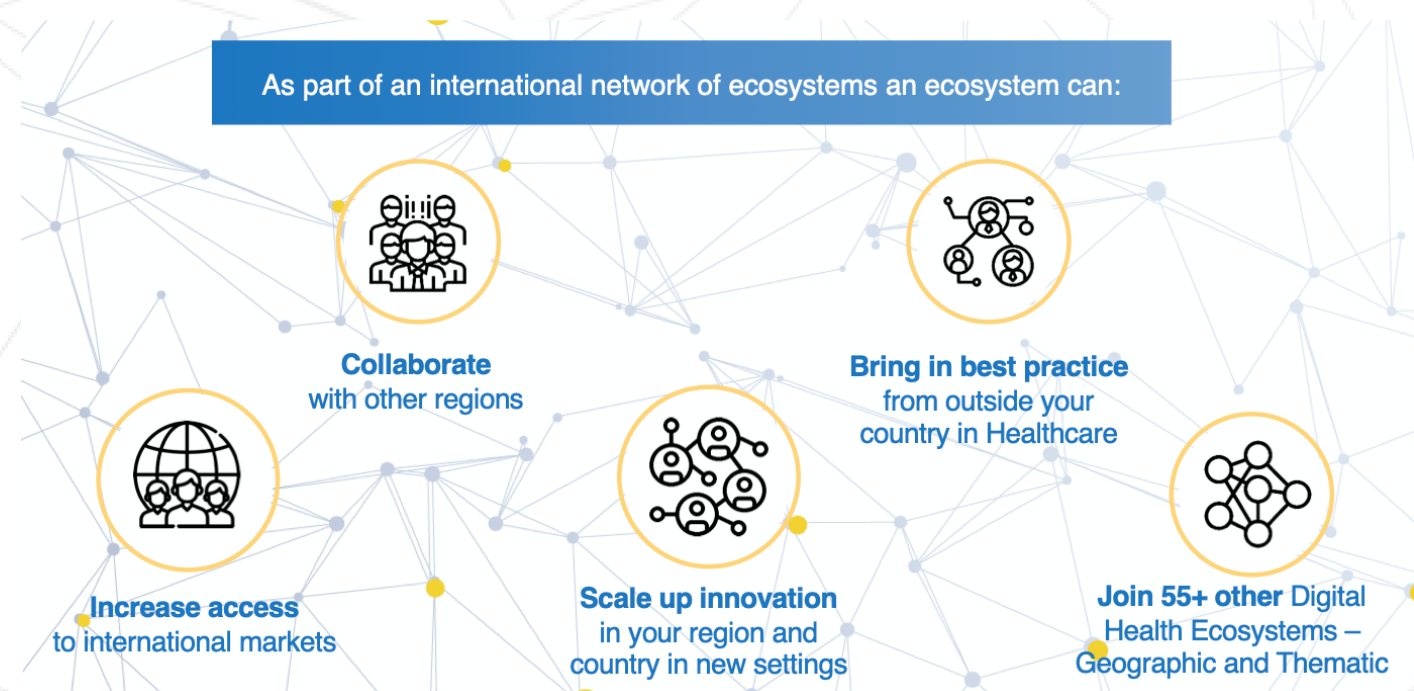
What does an ECHAlliance Ecosystem do?

Health and care are in constant evolution, and needs also change. Understanding those needs and sharing best practices are vital. This is where ECHAlliance ecosystems play a critical role.

Our ecosystems connect the dots between all stakeholders (local, national and international) involved in health and care to blend insights, knowledge, expertise and more.

In the last 10 years, ECHAlliance has built a network of 60 health ecosystems stretching from Australia to Argentina. We have built and strengthened ecosystem networks in regions like Finland, the UK, Germany and Latin America.

When ecosystems make the most of collaboration possibilities, ECHAlliance sees flourishing communities and rising opportunities.

As part of an international network of ecosystems an ecosystem can:

Collaborate with other regions

Bring in best practice from outside your country in Healthcare

Increase access to international markets

Scale up innovation in your region and country in new settings

Join 55+ other Digital Health Ecosystems – Geographic and Thematic

Who Joined the ECHAlliance Ecosystem Network in 2020?

Since 2011, and with the support of the European Commission, ECHAlliance has implemented a methodology and approach that has effectively established and managed ecosystems in more than 60 locations.

The reputation earned by this methodology, in fact, led us to continue growing globally in 2020. ECHAlliance ecosystems extended into networks based in Quebec, Lithuania, Mexico, Argentina, Bulgaria, Brazil, Chile, India and Uruguay.

What Typically Happens at an Ecosystem Meeting?

Ecosystem agendas vary yet many of the formats are similar in that there is a strong focus on leading with a need, showcasing best practices and fostering collaborations in workshops and pitching opportunities. Often, with an introduction to the theme of the day (shared in advance), ecosystem meetings will be opened by the host of the venue or an ecosystem coordinator.

First sessions begin with highlighting a need around a chosen theme, e.g. dementia or data sharing. The aim of this is to invite health and social care perspectives from professionals and, most importantly, citizens, such as patients or caregivers, in the region. Through these means, we are able to set the groundwork for challenges posed around this particular theme before different stakeholders.

We then follow up with best practices and strong examples of successful approaches from across the region and the wider network of ECHAlliance ecosystems, businesses or funded collaboration projects. In this respect, we see how forming part of the ECHAlliance international network of ecosystems could help certain regions learn from others with similar challenges whilst acquiring insight from successful innovations achieved in other countries.

As we mentioned earlier, an objective of ECHAlliance ecosystems is to break down silos in health and care. For this reason, ecosystem meetings may have the chance to separate into smaller groups and partake in workshops that target the need and promote opportunities to collaborate. There is the possibility for even those who are soft-spoken to voice their opinions and concerns, because it is here where partnerships can begin to take form.

Additionally, at this point, a keynote speaker or leader in the area can challenge and stimulate discussion before the gathering potentially engages in a series of innovation pitches. It's worth mentioning that these pitches from regional and international innovators fall in line with ECHAlliance's commitment to boost connectivity and awareness, as well as encourage adoption of proposed solutions.

In specific terms, these pitching sessions can help illustrate how such solutions are targeting a certain challenge; what their solution or service does; and what these innovators would need to execute the solution, e.g. partnering, testing, funding or advice. Inversely, other participants can discover more about what is available on the market in this particular field.

> **"Small- and medium-sized enterprises can take advantage of the opportunity to pitch their solutions to potential procurers or partners"**

Lastly, ecosystems may hold a networking event with displays and demonstrations. While these elements characterise the event, it is the chance to make connections and engage with various stakeholders that pique interest amongst many.

ECHAlliance's Pivotal Role in EU Projects

In 2020, ECHAlliance actively contributed to progressing digital health by participating in 10 European Projects funded by H2020, Interreg Europe, Erasmus+ and IMI2 Programmes as either Work Package Leader, Task Leader or Key Partner.

ECHAlliance European Union projects cover various core topics that are pivotal in the collaborative international effort to progress towards an inclusive and effective digital transformation of the health and care sector.

In 2020, we participated in policy-oriented actions, namely Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) for the European Commission, via WE4AHA or DigitalHealthEurope. We also promoted regional implementation of policies and activities through EU_SHAFE or pushed for the enhancement of digital skills in Erasmus+ projects like DISH.

Additionally, we participated in innovation projects developing solutions to support risk prediction and public health management in urban settings, design age-friendly living and working environments, foster healthier lifestyles and set up holistic systems to manage chronic diseases and increase quality of life at home and in the workplace.

In 2020, we also joined the Innovative Medicine Initiative (IMI) for the first time to lead the communication and dissemination activities of the five-year Gravitate Health project.

Lastly, we continued our work in contributing to key EU policy strategy, striving to create necessary political and systemic conditions and offer tailored services to the stakeholders involved in the digital transformation of health and care.

Cities for Health and Well-being

H2020 PULSE project came to its end in April 2020. The project's ambition was to leverage diverse data sources and big data analytics to transform public health from a reactive to a predictive system, and from a system focused on surveillance to an inclusive and collaborative system supporting health equity. Working within seven global cities, PULSE harvested open cities.

In this project, ECHAlliance led the work package related to dissemination, communications and exploitation and organised a whole set of activities to boost the visibility of the project and pave the way for future capitalization strategies from such results. In April 2020, ECHAlliance curated the organisation of the Final Workshop.

To learn more about PULSE and its achievements, click here.

Digital Health and Data Policies

DigitalHealthEurope is a H2020 Coordination and Support Action (CSA) that started in 2019 and ends in June 2021. It aims to provide comprehensive, integrated and centralised support to initiatives on digital health and care innovation. The project's approach involves actions that will boost innovation and advance the three Digital Single Market priorities for the digital transformation of health and care (DTHC):

1. Citizens' secure access to and sharing of health data across borders
2. Better data to advance research, disease prevention and personalised health and care
3. Digital tools for citizen empowerment and person-centred care

ECHAlliance investigated the topic of citizen-controlled health data sharing using multiple methods, from extensive desk research and interviews with experts to a large-scale consultation with citizens. The findings were discussed in many events held in 2020 and can be found summarised in the consultation paper entitled "Citizen-controlled Health Data Sharing Governance".

Moreover, within the framework of deployment support activities, ECHAlliance led a task aimed at analysing both technical barriers to at-scale implementation of person-centred health and care solutions, and the need to mobilise investments. By such an approach, we were able to focus on both demand (policy-makers, healthcare providers, patients/citizens, insurers) and supply (large companies, start-ups and SMEs, researchers).

To learn more about how DigitalHealthEurope has been fulfilling its three priorities, click here.

Demographic Change and Healthy Living

WE4AHA is a H2020 Coordination and Support Action (CSA) aimed at enabling participation and collaborative work within the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA).

Throughout the past four years, the action successfully connected demand- and supply-side stakeholders through matchmaking, twinning, assessing innovative interventions, fostering engagement and many other support activities. Apart from continuing tasks from the former **PROEIPAHA** project via the provision of CSA's typical services, this project was specifically conceived to support the EIP on AHA in three strategic horizontal activities:

1. The definition and execution of an Innovation-to-Market (I2M) plan
2. Further blueprint development to drive policy vision on digital innovation
3. The promotion of a broader use of the MAFEIP tool and expansion of its user community

These three horizontal initiatives accomplished their goal in mobilising a growing number of stakeholders in Europe's digital health and care and silver economy sectors – industry, public authorities, end users, financial institutions, investors, insurers, and research communities committed to large-scale innovations.

In this particular project, and in close collaboration with TicBioMed, ECHAlliance led the work package devoted to the I2M horizontal initiative.

To learn more about the key achievements of the project and more, click here.

GATEKEEPER is a European, multicentric large-scale pilot on smart living environments. Involving 43 partners from 7 EU member states, the project has aimed to enable the creation of a platform that connects healthcare providers, businesses, entrepreneurs, and elderly citizens and the communities in which they live to establish an open, trust-based arena that matches ideas, technologies, user needs and processes, and ensures healthier independent lives for ageing populations.

While the project will not finish until March 2023, ECHAlliance has already participated in the following activities to help move along the deployment of solutions, including:

- WP2 Ecosystem value co-creation; open calls for scaling up twinning
- WP7 GATEKEEPER large-scale pilot definition and execution
- WP8 Standardisation and certification mechanisms
- WP9 Dissemination, communications, exploitation and sustainability.

To learn more about GATEKEEPER and how it will demonstrate its value, click here.

The EDEN project, cofounded by the ERASMUS + Programme, was conceived to support relatives, health care professionals and local communities to create better lives for people living with dementia (PwD) and their relatives. Developed within the priority of adult education, EDEN aims to increase interaction and collaboration amongst relatives, professional caregivers, and representatives of civil society organisations through effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies. Via such approaches, people with dementia can continue to live well and enjoy life and a more dementia-friendly community can grow.

Within this project, ECHAlliance was responsible for defining a set of policy and implementation recommendations to support the sustainability and exploitation of the EDEN results beyond the project's perimeter.

To learn more about how the EDEN project goes beyond traditional means to achieve its objectives, click here.

ValueCare, started in December 2019 and running for 54 months, is a Horizon2020 EU project that has aimed to deliver efficient, outcome-based integrated (health and social) care to older people facing cognitive impairment, frailty and multiple chronic health conditions. Through such an approach, the project will help to improve quality of life for both this population and their families as well as promote and make European health and social care systems more sustainable.

The project's vision of integrated value-based care will be supported by a robust, secure and scalable digital solution that is tested and evaluated in seven large-scale pilots across Europe following a sound methodology developed by project partners and end users.

In this project, ECHAlliance led and will continue overseeing activities related to the exploitation of ValueCare' results, innovation management and business model definition.

To learn more about how ValueCare proposes greater efficiency in resource management and care coordination, click here.

Health and Well-being in The Workplace

SmartWork represents a novel way of working for an ageing population. The design and realization of age-friendly living and working environments has been a huge challenge, given that the number of older citizens who are and want to continue being active members of society and live independently is on a steady rise.

Therefore, within SmartWork, ECHAlliance was responsible for developing a business model based on a cost-benefit analysis of the SmartWork Service Suite. This helped to inform the exploitation plan and support continual communications and dissemination activities. ECHAlliance also organised the SmartWork-dedicated session at the Digital Health Society Summit in November 2020 and promoted the project amongst various audiences via social media, newsletters and other communication channels.
To learn more about SmartWork and read through its scope and objectives, click here.

Health Management and Safe Medication

Gravitate Health is a public-private partnership with 39 members from Europe and the US, co-led by University of Oslo (coordinator) and Pfizer (industry lead), and funded by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) – a joint undertaking by the European Commission, European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), and IMI Associated Partners.

The aim of Gravitate Health is to develop a digital health information tool called the Gravitate Lens (G-Lens) that is supported by an open-source digital platform and will provide approved information on medicine. It will also help guide patients to understandable, trustworthy and up-to-date information that meets their needs and fits their health context and literacy levels.

The ECHAlliance was chosen to manage dissemination for Gravitate Health. In 2020, the ECHAlliance began leading project engagement initiatives with worldwide ecosystems and collaborated with the elicitation of user needs and scenarios.

To learn more about Gravitate Health and what the partnership will publish in the coming year, click here.

Skills of Health and Care Workforce

DISH project started in November 2018 and focuses on present and future skill needs of the health and social care workforce whilst considering the necessary digitalisation occurring in the healthcare sector. It aims at developing, testing and implementing different concepts to provide health and social care staff with innovation readiness and digital skills, so as to enable them to better see opportunities in how and where to apply eHealth solutions.

The project addresses this key challenge through the establishment of a triple helix partnership amongst health and social care providers, educational institutions and enterprise representatives in each of the six countries involved in the project.

In 2020, ECHAlliance in collaboration with the European Health Management Association (EHMA), led all of DISH's communications and dissemination activities to support the project's strategic aims.

To learn about the scope and objectives of DISH and more, click here.

How ECHAlliance Promotes Projects and Studies

ECHAlliance supports a broad range of projects and studies by leveraging the experience and expertise of the organisation's directors and team members.

The following is a compilation of actions undertaken by ECHAlliance to promote projects and studies performed during 2020.

The aim of visuAAL is to bridge the knowledge gap between user requirements and the appropriate and secure use of video-based Active and Assisted Living (AAL) technologies to deliver effective and supportive care for older adults as they manage their health and wellbeing.

The visuAAL project belongs to the four-year (2020-2024) Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Network, and ECHAlliance serves as the partner organisation in charge of executing some training activities.

In the Hands on SHAFE project, partners develop smart, healthy, and well-built business online learning modules for volunteers, (in)formal caregivers and entrepreneurs to implement Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments (SHAFE) in their local community on behalf of themselves, relatives, friends, or the neighbourhood. The modules will be made available in six languages, including Polish, English, Dutch, German, French and Portuguese.

In 2020, ECHAlliance served as an associated partner of this project, funded within the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme. ECHAlliance contributed to the dissemination of project outcomes through our organisation's multiple ecosystems and partner communities.

The aim of the PlatformUptake.eu project is to observe, analyse and understand the whole ecosystem of open-service platforms and their related networks, and depict a picture that describes the whole ecosystem with its achievements and potential. The purpose of such an objective is to target all user groups whilst also generating synergies amongst platforms and their related projects in the AHA and IoT domain.

Seeking to support the large-scale uptake of the platforms as well, PlatformUptake.eu proposes the creation of an online information hub wherein users can find descriptive and support materials on all existing platforms, the organisation of several stakeholder events, and a massive, open online course.

ECHAlliance, as represented by International Project Director Valentina Tageo, supported the consortium as a member of the External Advisory Board.

Conventional accountability metrics to measure the impact of health R&I processes are not normally able to represent the claims of different actors. The development of a new integrated collective research impact framework would be instrumental in enabling return of investment (ROI) by each involved stakeholder under the perspective of collective sustainability.

MULTI-ACT aims to deliver and test a new Collective Research Impact Framework (CRIF) via application in multi-stakeholder research initiatives within the domain of brain diseases. Key responsible research and innovation (RRI) issues addressed include public engagement, research governance and research impact assessment.

ECHAlliance, as represented by Ecosystem and Membership Director Andy Bleaden, supported the consortium as a member of the External Advisory Board.

Collaboration in EU Initiatives and Networks

In addition to projects and studies, ECHAlliance contributed to policy- and advocacy-oriented initiatives and stakeholder networks that were aligned with our strategic priorities, upheld complementary visions and promoted mutual learning and shared goals.

The European Innovation Partnership in Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA) is an initiative launched by the European Commission to foster innovation and digital transformation in the field of active and healthy ageing. The EIP on AHA was the first EIP created. Since 2011, it has evolved ino a growing and dynamic community. Its foundation pillars include thematic action groups and reference sites, i.e. inspirational ecosystems that deliver creative and workable solutions that improve the lives and health of older people and the whole community. Moreover, horizontal and cross-cutting initiatives have supported this endeavour during the last four years, namely the Blueprint, MAFEIP and the Innovation-to-Market (I2M) initiative.

ECHAlliance has been involved in the EIP on AHA since its inception. In recent years, ECHAlliance has led the I2M initiative aimed at both reinforcing links between companies, start-ups, and researchers as they develop solution – the supply side – and bridging a gap with expectations and needs of care providers, policy-makers, insurers and other potential buyers of these products and services – the demand side.

SHAFE (Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments) began as a thematic network approved by the European Commission to draw policy makers, organisations and citizens' attention to the need for better alignment amongst health, social care, built environments and ICT with respect to policy and funding. In 2018, it delivered a Joint Statement and Framing Paper to the European Commission and member states before evolving into a European Stakeholder Network. It currently hosts more than 170 partner organisations and is coordinated by Carina Dantas (Portugal) and Willeke van Staalduinen (The Netherlands).

Its Position Paper, released in 2020, included recommendations that aimed to promote healthier environments for all citizens and make environments accessible, sustainable and reachable with the support of ICT.

ECHAlliance has been the main partner of this network since its start. In 2020, ECHAlliance supported the activities of this multifaceted and lively community.

The "Profiling and Training The Healthcare Workers of The Future" thematic network was hosted by the European Commission's Health Policy Platform in 2020. The goal of the thematic network was to support the European Commission and its member states in profiling healthcare workers' needs for the future of care; identifying and improving their core competencies; and highlighting their critical role in the debate about health system reforms, digitalisation and new models of care.

Since its launch, the thematic network produced a joint statement that consulted a large community of key stakeholders and contained concluding recommendations on healthcare workforce education, training and planning for the future of care, and identification of necessary skill-mix and areas of improvement for EU collaboration and best practice sharing.

In 2020, ECHAlliance served as a member of the thematic network and actively promoted its activities by helping establish bridges and synergies with other projects, such as DISH.

All Policies for a Healthy Europe (AP4HE) is a multi-stakeholder and intersectoral initiative that brings together a diverse group of NGOs, think tanks, associations, companies and individuals. Its mission is to put citizens' health and well-being at the heart of EU policy making. The core concept is that health should be considered in every policy area of the European Commission and its member states. It has three working groups (Environmental, Economy and Digital), which have each published a policy paper.

Both ECHAlliance and the Digital Health Society (DHS) are founding Knowledge Partners. DHS Chair Bleddyn Rees headed the digital working group in 2020 and will continue doing so until the end of 2021.

The EU Health Coalition is a multi-stakeholder initiative looking at mapping the future of healthcare in Europe. It is trying to constructively influence and assist the European Union in addressing the challenges we face and critically at how can different sectors converge to deliver the best outcomes for patients in Europe.

Both ECHAlliance and the Digital Health Society (DHS) are founding members.

ECHAlliance Events 2020

January - March

- Organised the 4th Joint eHealth Ireland and Northern Ireland Ecosystem Gathering
- Spoke at the AgeingFit 2020 - France
- Collaborated with BHH to host the Digital Health Open Doors Conference - Spain
- Spoke at the Scottish Ecosystem Gathering – Healthy Ageing Innovation Cluster
- Had a speaking slot at the Development of a Bucharest Digital Health Ecosystem Gathering
- Spoke at Funding for Healthcare Innovation – by EITHealth and FreshBlood
- Moderated a session at the Webinar "Fast Track to Reimbursement for Digital Health Applications" - Germany
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem – Webinar "What our ecosystems are doing about COVID-19"

April - June

- Hosted the second PopupEcosystem – Webinar "What our ecosystems are doing about COVID-19"
- Organised the Webinar "Entre Ecosistemas de Salud de Iberoamérica"
- Organised PULSE Final Online Workshop "Big Data and the Future of Population Health"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Hope in COVID-19 Times"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Social Care and Home care in COVID Times"
- Spoke at the "Finnish Ecosystems as a Resource for Health and Wellbeing Development" webinar
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Mental Health in COVID Times"
- Hosted the The 2nd Ibero-American Webinar "Argentina in the Spotlight on Telemedicine – Current Situation and Challenges"
- Hosted the The 2nd Ibero American Webinar "Mexico in the Spotlight on Telehealth"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Dementia in Covid-19 Times"
- Led 3 session at the ATA2020 Conference & Expo - USA
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Data Donation – What Has Changed in Covid-19 Times"

July - September

- Co-organised the Ecosistema de Salud Conectada de Iberoamérica "Estrategia Nacional de Salud Digital -Historia Clínica Electrónica Estrategia Nacional de Salud Digital"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Canada and Europe Tackle COVID-19 and Isolation"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar "Matching Supply & Demand in COVID Times"
- Spoke at the AHBS Webinar Series Partnerships for COVID19 in Africa – Digital health
- Co-organised the Ecosistema de Salud Conectada de Iberoamérica "Innovación, Inteligencia Artificial y Realidad Virtual aplicada a la Salud"
- Hosted the PopupEcosystem Webinar India: The road to telemedicine
- Spoke at the Launch of the HESS Health4all Ecosystem - Germany
- Co-organised the Ecosistema de Salud Conectada Argentina – Herramientas de financiamiento para innovación en salud
- Spoke at the Australia and Europe – Digital Health Transformation, Agility & Resilience
- Spoke at the Congreso de salud digital
- Partnered with the conference "Soluciones Tecnológicas para La Lucha Contra el COVID-19"
- Partnered with WIRED Health:Tech Conference
- Spoke at the Healthcare Innovation Show - Portugal
- Hosted the DISH – Digital Skills for The Health Workforce – European Reference Group First Workshop

October - December

- Spoke at the eHealth2020 – Virtual International Conference 2020 - Finland
- Co-organised the Ecosistema de Salud Conectada Argentina – Neurociencia & Tecnología 3D aplicada a la Salud
- Led two sessions at the HLTH Virtual Conference - USA
- Co-organised the Norwegian Ecosystem Gathering – How to Involve Users to Create Better Healthcare?
- Led two sessions during V Fórum #RIES20 - Spain
- Partnered with and spoke at the Smart Health Summit - UK
- Spoke at the BeHEALTH – Online International Event in Healthcare
- Spoke at two sessions during the Health Data Forum- Portugal
- Co-organised the Digital Health Innovation in the Highland and Islands: COVID Needs and Opportunities - Scotland
- Co-organised the Ecosistema de Salud Conectada Argentina-Hospital del Futuro
- Co-organised the Treviso Health & Social Care Innovation Ecosystem - Italy
- Partnered with Frontiers Health Conference
- Organised the 2nd Digital Health Society Summit - Germany
- Spoke at the Interprofessional Education for Capacity Building in Digital Health
- Partnered with the Hackathon de Salud Virtual - Spain
- Spoke at the El futuro de la Salud post COVID-19 - Brasil
- Spoke at the Digital Health World Congress 2020- UK
- Co-organised the Valencia Ecosystem Gathering - Spain
- Spoke at the Scotland's Digital Health & Care Event DigiFest2020
- Co-organised the Argentina Ecosystem Gathering "El Hospital del Futuro" Capítulo 2
- Spoke at EUREGHA's High-level Annual Conference - Brussels
- Spoke at MyData Online 2020 Conference - Finland
- Spoke at Ecosistema de Salud Conectada - Uruguay

Communications

AT A GLANCE

website visitors:

51,654

social media:

6,825 followers

1,950 posts

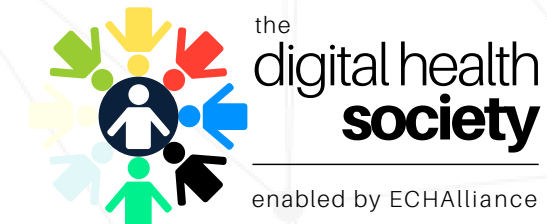>200K impressions

newsletters sent:

20

content produced:

53

videos published:

53

The Digital Health Society (DHS)

the digital health society

enabled by ECHAlliance

"For the Digital Health Society, 2020 marked a period of great undertakings and actions."

At the end of 2019, we held our first DHS Summit in Helsinki entitled "Connecting Digital Health & Data Initiatives in Europe". In collaboration with the Finnish Presidency, we aimed to continue the DHS links with EU Presidencies.

During the summer and autumn of 2020, the Digital Health Society joined European Institute for Innovation through Health Data (I~HD and Dipak Kalra) to host two roundtables. We invited experts to explore in-depth issues related to health data and the creation of the European Health Data Space. Sponsored by pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson (J&J) and technological leader Microsoft, the event witnessed a high number of attendees and published papers following the gathering (in February 2021). Each paper comprised reports from each roundtable and highlighted 7 Calls to Action. The report was submitted to the European Commission's Consultation on the European Health Data Space in February 2021.

In November 2020, we also held the 2nd DHS Summit, attracting more than 550 registrations from 55 countries. The summit focused on "Acceptance Criteria and Technical Prerequisites for Societal Trust in the Use of Health Data and the Most Innovative Citizen-controlled Data Sharing Governance Models". Highlights from the event included hosting guest speakers from the Trio of Presidencies (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) and listening to their insightful experiences in digital health and activities or plans for the area.

Lastly, in a strategic re-organisation, the Digital Health Society welcomed Bleddyn Rees as the new Chair of DHS, whilst Brian O' Connor focused his attention on expanding ECHAlliance and the Global Health Connector. To guide the Digital Health Society into further success, the Board has appointed both Julien Venne and Valentina Tageo as directors.

With 2021 in full motion, the Digital Health Society now looks forward to strengthening its role as he data and health data management arm of ECHAlliance. DHS will be able to access the 55 international ecosystems from ECHAlliance to implement and test deployments of data innovations and best practices from other sectors. Secondly, in November 2021, DHS will be hosting its 3rd DHS Summit. Finally, in a continued collaboration with I~HD and J&J and Microsoft as sponsors, the DHS has agreed to two new projects for 2021: "Proposing a Common Basis for Data Across Europe" and "Scaling Up the Availability and Reusability of Big Health Data".

The Digital Health Observatory (DHO)

digital health observatory

empowered by ECHAlliance

The [Digital Health Observatory](#) is a collaborative and non-for-profit initiative, in which we facilitate and promote the transfer of knowledge, creating a community of knowledge in digital health for all professionals from across various health ecosystems.

The mission of the Digital Health Observatory is to identify, assess, organize and promote communications that have the level and value added to accelerate Digital Health Transformation.

In 2020, the Digital Health Observatory covered topics such as industry and start up; COVID-19, best practices; digital health knowledge; and innovation and research. We published 52 articles in total.

Legal Structure, Corporate Governance, Sources & Use of Funds

ECHAlliance is a not-for-profit, membership international organisation and network, whose objectives are to:

- Promote the digital transformation of the health and social care sector;
- Facilitate the dialogue between all the stakeholders involved in health and care, such as governments and policy-makers, citizens and patients, health and social care professionals and providers, voluntary and charitable sector, academic institutions and researchers, industry and start-ups, regulators and public and private health and social care funders;
- Connect all stakeholders, acting as an honest broker and breaking down the silos in the health and care systems;
- Contribute to the creation and the dissemination of knowledge, innovations, good practices, methodologies, public policies, etc. needed for the development of the digital health;
- Support the development of multidisciplinary projects and the implementation of innovative solutions fostering the positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the population.

ECHAlliance has established a set of core values and principles to guide its development

- The management of its activities is through legal entities in a number of jurisdictions.
- Each entity has been established under Company law in each country and must comply with certain requirements for example the establishment of a board of directors and filing of prescribed corporation information including accounts.
- Our aim was to find a structure which was transparent and compliant with not only legal requirements but also would allow us to fulfil our aim of being a "Not for Profit" entity
- We established our first company under the "Community Interest Company" Regulations (learn more about CIC's [here](#)) registered in Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.
- This enables us to operate as a limited liability company. Accordingly, any profits/surplus made by the company must be reinvested in the activities of the company.
- There are, based on the latest public info about 16,000 CICs in the UK
- Following the Brexit vote we needed to incorporate a legal entity in the Europe Union and we chose to register in Ireland under the "Company Limited by Guarantee" regulations (learn more about CLG's [here](#))
- These legal entities ensure we undertake non-profit activities in both countries in a transparent and compliant manner.

Transparency and Compliance

- As a partner in EU funded projects, ECHAlliance receives grants from the various funding programmes. For those, we follow the strict guidelines set by the European Commission and the specific programmes. This includes the audits to check compliance with funding rules and guidelines.

- ECHAlliance fulfils its obligations of transparency, such as for instance the official declaration and publication by the ECHAlliance Board Directors of their other activities (e.g., academic activities, governmental positions and involvement in for-profit companies).

Corporate Governance

ECHAlliance has a Board of six Directors and holds regular meetings. The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing, assessing and monitoring the Company's purpose, values, strategy, culture and controlling its operational performance.

The Company has procedures in place for managing conflicts of interest. Should a director become aware that they, or any of their connected parties, have an interest in an existing or proposed transaction with ECHAlliance, they should notify the Board in writing or at the next Board meeting. Internal controls are in place to ensure that any related party transactions involving directors, or their connected parties, are conducted on an arm's length basis. Directors have a continuing duty to update any changes to these conflicts.

Source & Use of Funds

ECHAlliance receives income and funding from membership fees, consulting services provided to members, Industry sponsorships and from public funds including EU funded projects.

ECHAlliance uses its funding to provide a range of services to its members and community including:

- The creation of International Ecosystems and the coordination of those Ecosystems;
- Organising events including 120 Ecosystem meetings per annum and international conferences as well as assisting with content and speaking opportunities for members at events organised by third parties and partners;
- Newsletters, social media and other communications to promote the activities of members, Ecosystems and our wider community.
- Thought leadership activities such membership of All Policies for a Healthy Europe and the EU Health Coalition and submitting responses to public consultations and
- Providing the administration and staffing services for the activities of the Digital Health Society.

ECHAlliance does not employ any staff but its dedicated and professional team are engaged under contracts for services. Fees to directors were paid for services are transparent, and paid under written contracts approved by the Board disclosed in our public accounts.

- Following the Brexit vote we needed to incorporate a legal entity in the Europe Union and we chose to register in Ireland under the "Company Limited by Guarantee" regulations (learn more about CLG's here)
- These legal entities ensure we undertake non-profit activities in both countries in a transparent and compliant manner.

We are a not-for-profit organisation, operating as a Community Interest Company (CIC) registered in the UK in Belfast; and a Company Limited by Guarantee in Dublin, Ireland.

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