

**Title:** Digital Health Tools in Europe - challenges and approaches

**Keynote speaker:** Nick Fahy, Director of the Health and Wellbeing Research Group, RAND Europe

**Abstract:** Digital health tools hold out great potential to help to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of health services. However, they have proved persistently hard to implement in practice, at least in ways that realise those benefits. Why is this?

While putting digital health tools into practice does involve technical challenges, many of the barriers to implementation are not technical – rather, they are about change at individual, organizational and system level, and thus face all the challenges of large-scale change in complex health systems combined with the specific technical challenges of digital health.

This can be illustrated through examples of challenges in practice, such as digital facilitation in primary care, electronic blood transfusion safety systems, and remote consultations in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic. These illustrate some of the challenges for making good use of digital health tools as part of wider objectives of improving the efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and sustainability of European health systems.

**Presentation of keynote speaker:**

Nick Fahy is the research group director for health and well-being at RAND Europe, where he oversees research in the full range of health policy including public health, health systems, technology and innovation, and workplace health and wellbeing. Dr Fahy joined RAND Europe from the University of Oxford, where he was a senior researcher in the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, and he remains a fellow at Green Templeton College.

As a researcher and consultant in health policy and systems, he looks at how health systems work; lessons learned by comparing health systems across countries; and how to bring about constructive change in health systems. Previously, Nick Fahy was a health policymaker at national and European level, including over a decade in the European Commission, most recently as head of the health information unit of the Health and Consumer Protection DG which included responsibility for digital health policy. His own work focuses in particular innovation and change in health systems, as well as the role of evidence in policy and decision-making. This currently includes supporting Lloyds Register Foundation in their establishment of a Global Safety Evidence Centre.

Dr Fahy has a D.Phil. from the University of Oxford in evidence-based health, and he is a chartered psychologist. He is a professor of policy analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School, and an expert advisor on innovation and implementation for the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.