

Improved Quality and Access to Health Data Essential to Global Health

21 February 2011

Geneva, Switzerland, 21 February 2011 – The World Economic Forum today launches an ambitious project to advance global health through improved data collection and management. The Global Health Data Charter recognizes that accurate health data is essential for effective and efficient health management. The Charter aims to enable individuals and patients, health professionals and policy-makers to make more informed decisions through secure access to comprehensive, quality data. The Charter was developed by the World Economic Forum, with project advisory services and support provided by Deloitte and a broad group of stakeholders.

“This Charter represents a tipping point in our transition from the old days of capturing data on paper to the modern era of global interconnectedness supported by sophisticated and secure data sharing to improve health for everyone,” says Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum. “Our role has always been that of the catalyst – identifying the gaps, creating the solution and activating change. The Global Health Data Charter is a further illustration of that commitment.”

Access to comprehensive health data is critical given increasing challenges to accessibility and delivery of high-quality care under increasing fiscal pressures. Across the health system, in both developed and developing countries, accurate health data is simply not available. Despite the overwhelming demand, there are a number of critical challenges to the collection, analysis and application of high-quality health data.

“Improving quality and access to health data is essential to patients, communities and health service providers worldwide, “ says Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organization and Acting Executive Secretary of Health Metrics Network. “This Charter provides a comprehensive mechanism to engage private and public sector stakeholders to develop better methods of health data management.”

The Global Health Data Charter consists of eight key principles representing the data gaps which the charter founders identified as the most pressing and most realistic to improve in the short term. These principles revolve around two fundamental gaps – access to and privacy of health data.

“Access” refers to the ability to effectively and efficiently get the right data, in the right format, where and when it is needed. “Privacy” advocates for the development of protocols to address the challenges and risks associated with data misuse.

“Access to better data is essential to identifying and understanding gaps, allocating resources and monitoring interventions as well as furthering innovation and research,” says Georges Halvorson, Chief Executive Officer of Kaiser Permanente and Member of the World Economic Forum Global Health Advisory Board. “Better management of data is not only a best practice – it’s a business imperative.”

Seven fundamental enablers are necessary for successful implementation of the charter.

“The Global Health Data Charter is in line with the long-term strategy of HIMMS to advance the

sharing and interoperability of health data – good data is a prerequisite for making the right decisions at all levels”, says John P Hoyt, Executive Vice-President at HIMMS Analytics. The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMMS) aims to encourage the adoption of the charter to its members and the organizations its surveys.”

The initial global support of the Charter boasts endorsements from The Global Health Council (GHC), Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), International Council of Nurses (ICN), International Federation of Health Plans (IFHP), International Hospital Federation (IHF), International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), Population Services International (PSI), Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) and World Information Technology Services Association (WITSA). The charter is available for download and endorsements are encouraged at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_HE_GlobalHealthData_Charter_2011.pdf.

Notes to Editors

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