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Success of future health systems hinges on access to data, say experts

An international group of population health experts is calling for sharing of health data to be the norm if precision health agendas are to succeed and build sustainable health systems.

Key messages

- Health systems are failing citizens and need radical revamp
- Success of precision health agenda hinges on data and data sharing
- The silos between clinical and public health practice and between clinical practice and research must be broken down

Health systems are not keeping up with technology

The signatories – from UK, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Canada and the United States – note that people and patients across the world are being let down by the slow, evolutionary pace of change in health systems that fails to keep pace with massive advances in digital and genome-based technologies.

In their statement [Paths to precision health: act now](#) published today, the signatories urge for **active leadership** to address this major obstacle to the success of precision health agendas and to harness new technologies to drive the public's participation in its health.

Gathering in Cambridge, UK at a summit hosted by Dr Ron Zimmern (Chairman, PHG Foundation), the signatories urged governments to take revolutionary and disruptive action that will make sharing personal health data an accepted civic responsibility for all citizens.

[Paths to precision health: act now](#)

The vision set out in the statement is for a new reciprocal model for health in which the silos between public health and clinical medicine are removed and the emphasis is on prevention and health over treatment and cure. In this model citizens will be expected to 'pay forward' by contributing their genetic and medical data as "an investment in the country's path to health"

Specifically, [Paths to precision health: act now](#) urges the freeing of data and engagement of citizens to make available to researchers and clinicians standardised, comprehensive and diverse health-related data as a matter of urgency.

Quote: Dr Ron Zimmern, Chair, PHG Foundation

“Data and information will be critical to the development of precision healthcare. Sharing data as the norm and ensuring that the entire health system works together will require a radical reorganisation. Evolutionary change will not suffice. We must embrace a more radical agenda to make these changes happen”

Paths to precision health: act now - Full statement is [here](#)

ENDS

To arrange an interview with Dr Ron Zimmern and for further information contact
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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Ickworth summit

This statement is the result of a summit of international population health experts from the UK, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Canada and the United States, who came together on 5 & 6 October 2016 to discuss the future of health systems in the light of genomics and other biological and digital technologies. The summit was convened by the signatories below, speaking on their own behalf, and was hosted by the PHG Foundation.

- Dr Ron Zimmern, PHG Foundation, Cambridge UK
- Prof Bartha Knoppers, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
- Prof Eric M. Meslin, Council of Canadian Academies, Ottawa, Canada
- Prof Walter Ricciardi, National Institute of Health, Italy

About the PHG Foundation

PHG Foundation is an independent, non-profit health policy think tank based in the Cambridge biotech cluster. We focus on how genomics and other emerging health technologies can provide more effective, personalised healthcare and deliver improvements in health for patients and citizens. We also provide the secretariat for the APPG on Personalised Medicine.

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