

# THE KEY TO A HEALTHIER UAE

Shainoor Khoja, Chief Impact Officer at Right Health, explains how technology can help boost wellbeing across the emirates



Providing quality, state-of-the-art healthcare services and ensuring people's well-being is central to any government's agenda. Governments around the world are increasingly looking at ways to efficiently invest in healthcare infrastructure and introducing new models to address the gaps in healthcare and improve the overall welfare of their people.

"In the Middle East, the UAE has spearheaded this movement through improving the accessibility and availability of quality care in partnership with the private sector.

"Over the last decade, research in the UAE has shown the prevalence of chronic and non-communicable diseases across the country, indicating the need for better population health management. As per the *Dubai Health Investment Guide 2018*, published by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), diabetes was declared a critical condition across the adult population in the UAE with a prevalence ratio that is two to four times higher than certain developed countries, while 34.5% of the adult population was diagnosed as overweight. Earlier, in 2016, DHA reported that cardiovascular diseases and cancer caused 51% of all deaths in the UAE.

"Both the government and private sector should regard population health management as a key solution if we are to ensure a healthier and more productive workforce. With Dubai marching towards becoming a smart city and hub of innovation, the government is encouraging the healthcare sector to utilise the modern solutions currently available. Through leveraging data analytics and artificial intelligence tools, healthcare information from vendors can be aggregated to establish a shared medical record platform, which can be accessed in real-time, across the UAE.

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"Healthcare professionals need access to detailed data from various sources including hospitals, primary care providers, specialists, pharmacies and the patients themselves. A central repository of data needs to be created that includes each patient's medical records with details of medical transactions, tests, vital signs, medications, allergies, imaging reports and more.

"Once the data is centralised it will aid the government, insurers and healthcare professionals to track diseases, trends and lifestyle issues. The flow of health data will assist in preventative healthcare, improve patient safety, research plans in the healthcare system, and boost the overall quality of healthcare services.

"It is clear that effective population health management largely depends on having access to data and the right to analyse the data. Rather than adopting a reactive approach in the healthcare system, the UAE government is now looking towards establishing preventative healthcare for the betterment of the population. The nation is making quick strides through devising plans to utilise technology, robotics and Artificial Intelligence tools for collating healthcare information." †