



SYDNEY NORTH HEALTH NETWORK

DIGITAL HEALTH STRATEGY

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 **SYDNEY NORTH**
Health Network

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SNHN Digital Health Strategy (The Strategy) is a framework that provides guidance on how SNHN will fulfil our vision, 'Achieving together – better health, better care'^[1], through the use and development of digital health programs, tools and technology in our region over the next four years.

What is digital health and why is it important for SNHN?

Digital health is not about technologies, it is about health. The Australian Institute of Digital Health defines it as "any application of information and communication technologies in order to improve healthcare and health outcomes". It also describes digital health as health and healthcare in the context of digital societies (the people, organisations and things engaged in persistent digital interactions) and emphasizes that it is citizen centric.^[2, 3]

SNHN recognises the value of digital health technologies and services. The Strategy outlines our understanding of the way these contribute to the health and wellbeing of our community and support our planning for future engagement in this area with our members, key stakeholders, and the broader community we serve.

Developing the SNHN Digital Health Strategy

The Strategy has been developed with the guidance of our Digital Health Strategic Advisory Group, which has academic expertise in digital health. It has had input from our SNHN Clinical and Consumer Councils and key stakeholders in the community and been co-designed with clinician members and community representatives. It recognises the broader digital health landscape, including recognised national and jurisdictional strategies for digital health, as well as the needs of our local region. SNHN recognises the role of digital health technologies, and the use of technologies by health providers and community members, as 'consumers of digital technologies'.

The SNHN Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Drawing from key elements of the SNHN Strategic Plan 2018-2023, 'Achieving Together – better health, better care'^[1], this SNHN Digital Health Strategy is focused on the organisation's broader objectives to invest in primary health care, provide value to communities, and fulfil SNHN's overarching goals. These goals include community activation, system transformation, commissioning, member, and provider support, and being an exceptional organisation.

Overview of our digital health strategic objectives

The SNHN Digital Health Strategy is aligned with the 'Quadruple Aim'^[4] in addition to our Strategic Plan 2018-23 goals. The Quadruple Aim describes the principles for optimising health system performance through four main areas, being to improve population health outcomes, to enhance patient experience, to improve provider experience and to promote cost effectiveness. The Quadruple Aim's four key areas provide the quadrants we use to organise our digital health strategic objectives and integrate these with the goals of our Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

There are three key digital health strategic objectives presented within each Quadruple Aim quadrant. These objectives represent a broad set of aims and are inclusive of internal focus areas for our organisation, other activities that may require collaboration with external stakeholders, as well as engagement with consumers and the broader community. They have been co-designed with SNHN members and community representatives. They provide an organising structure to guide our future digital health activities and align them with our programs and goals.

1. INTRODUCTION – A COMPLEX HEALTH SYSTEM

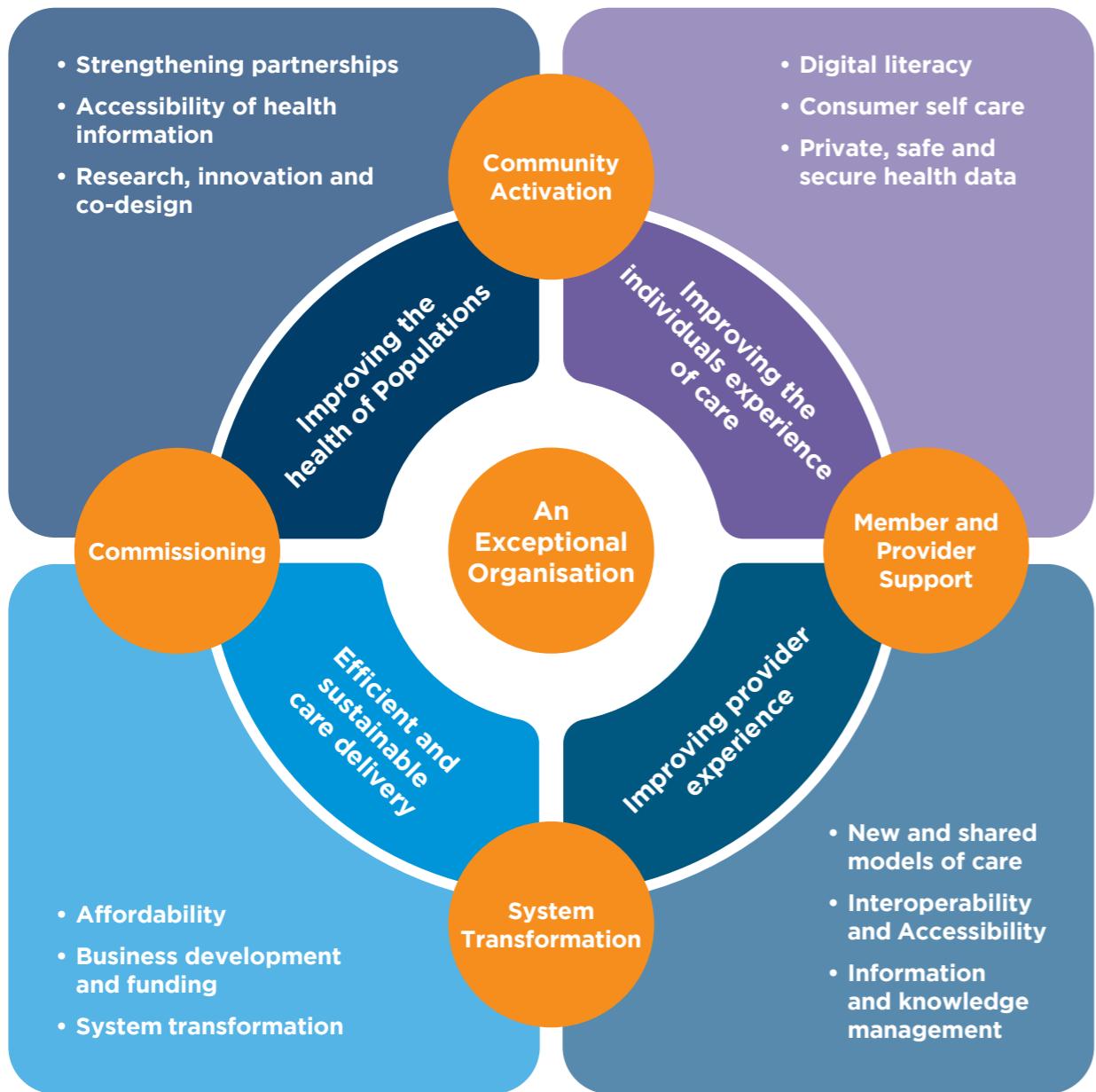


FIGURE 1. THE SNHN DIGITAL STRATEGY OBJECTIVES ALIGNED WITH OUR SNHN GOALS AND THE ‘QUADRUPLE AIM’.

What does success look like?

The Digital Health Strategy presents a range of high-level success indicators and recommended actions within each of the digital health ‘quadruple aim’ theme areas. It is envisioned that SNHN will develop these in collaboration with other key stakeholders, in order to realise success for our digital health strategic objectives.

Digital health by nature is a rapidly evolving field, with innovation and opportunities likely to emerge over the coming four years of the forward plan presented in this

Strategy. Therefore, the success indicators and future actions presented will require an iterative approach as the needs of our community change, and new innovations and opportunities emerge for SNHN and our local region.

Investment in digital health will support better health outcomes and wellbeing for people. The SNHN Digital Health Strategy is a guide that can be used to enable the delivery of systems and services by our Primary Health Network (PHN) that support the digital healthcare needs of the future for our region.

Digital health is not about technologies, it is about health. It is not simply electronic health records or the use of technology in the health industry; rather, it is innovation in terms of the utilisation of technologies in a complex health management setting. Digital health goes far beyond the normal health system structures based on the illness model. Digital health crosses all boundaries in health systems and its goal is consumer wellness.^[2]

The SNHN Digital Health Strategy (The Strategy) is a framework for making decisions about how SNHN will fulfil the vision for digital health at SNHN.

The Australasian Institute of Digital Health (AIDH) defines digital health as “any application of information and communication technologies in order to improve healthcare and health outcomes”. It describes the concept as health and healthcare in the context of digital societies (the people, organisations and things engaged in persistent digital interactions), and notes that digital health:

- harvests data, information, and knowledge in real time from all societal activities, not just interactions with the health system and/or data traditionally regarded as “health” data
- uses sophisticated analytics to distil knowledge from these data
- intervenes in the widest possible range of societal and economic activities and technologies to encourage and generate better health and better value for health investments
- is citizen (not provider/customer/patient) centric, decentralised and requires health service providers to participate, not control^[3].

The current Australian health system has complex funding arrangements and silos that create barriers to the sharing of information between different parts of the health sector. Australians want transparent services that puts control of their health in their hands. The National Digital Health Strategy highlights that digital health should be accessible to everyone, not just those experienced with digital systems. People want their healthcare providers to help them navigate a complex system and have access to information to help them do this. Healthcare providers want digital health to give timely access to patient health information, reducing the administrative burden to give more time to consult with their patients.^[5]

Our SNHN Digital Health Strategy offers a framework for developing new initiatives that can help overcome the information barriers that people and clinicians experience in our complex health system.

2. VISION OF OUR DIGITAL HEALTH STRATEGY



'Improved health and wellbeing enabled by digital health solutions and technologies.'

Digital health will be valued and adopted if it is:

- accessible and supports equitable and universal access to quality health services
- enhances the efficiency and sustainability of health systems in delivering quality, affordable and equitable care
- strengthens and scales up health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, management, rehabilitation, and palliative care
- respects and protects the privacy and security of patient health information.^[6]

The vision further seeks to enhance research and development, innovation, and collaboration across sectors. It recognises that digital health can greatly improve health outcomes but requires co-design with consumers, clinicians, and key stakeholders in

our region for success. It also requires appropriate investment in innovation and service development, including workforce capacity building and training. This in turn will enable the changes needed to develop future digital systems and support improved data use by our health workforce as health systems and services are increasingly digitised.

Investment in people and processes, in line with national, state, and local strategies, will allow digital health services and technologies to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of care. It will also provide the requirements for new models of care to emerge that improve health outcomes and benefit consumers and clinicians. It will improve the connectedness of people and clinicians to information needed in our complex health system to deliver safe and effective care.

"Benefits of digital health - improved immunisations rates, Practice Nurse support, and for me - not having to write the basics of every detail on a script. Patients also now have access to their own medical information via My Health Record."

Dr Magda Campbell, GP

3. ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER KEY FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES

The SNHN Digital Health Strategy was designed with a consideration of the broader digital health ecosystem including jurisdictional, national, and international digital health priorities and frameworks. It is also aligned with two key frameworks that broadly guide the operations of our network. These are the SNHN's 2018-23 Strategy, 'Achieving Together - better health, better care'^[4], and the Quadruple Aim.^[4]

Sydney North Health Network's 2018-23 goals

The SNHN's 2018-23 Strategy, 'Achieving Together - better health, better care', is focused on the organisation's broader objectives to invest in primary health care, provide value to communities, and fulfil the SNHN overarching goals. The Strategic Plan 2018-23 presents a set of goals, which include community activation, system transformation, commissioning, member, and provider support, and being an exceptional organisation. They are presented in the figure below, along with the roles and strategies identified by SNHN to fulfil these goals.

FIGURE 2. THE SNHN STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023 GOALS, ROLES AND STRATEGIES

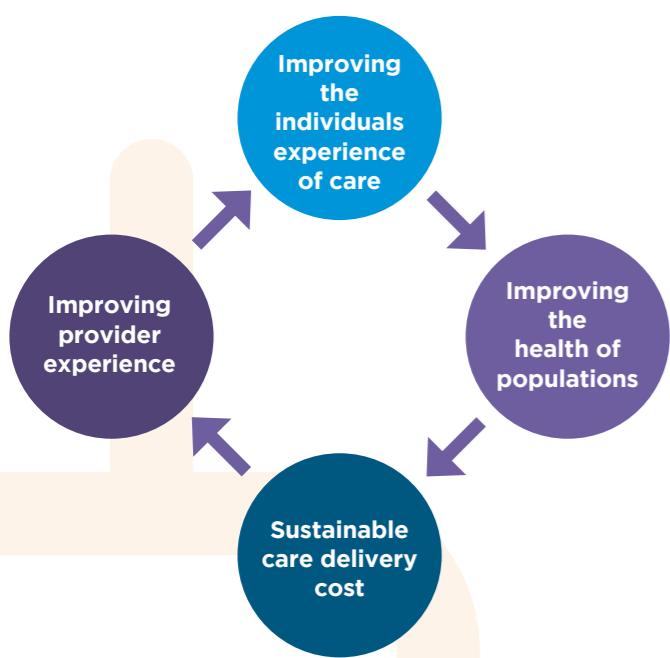
GOALS	ROLES	STRATEGIES
A. Community Activation 	Support our community to self-determine and help itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grow health literacy to enable self-determination• Enable health advocacy on highest-impact determinants of health• Facilitate communities to mutually support one another
B. System Transformation 	Catalyse change by enabling new approaches to health and healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop new partner and business initiatives• Redesign services to heighten Quadruple Aim• Build digital system enablers
C. Commissioning 	Attract and distribute resources to provide services that people need most	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out targeted health planning• Leverage service improvements through commissioned services
D. Member & Provider Support 	Build capacity for all providers of primary healthcare to adopt new tools, deal with disruption and improve outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide core practice support for quality improvement• Develop future change and skills capacity
E. An Exceptional Organisation 	Develop excellence in our operations, our people and our visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate our purpose and achievements powerfully• Grow the capabilities and culture of our people• Develop financial and information systems that support ongoing investment and growth.

4. THE STRATEGY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Quadruple Aim

The Digital Health Strategy is also aligned with the 'Quadruple Aim', which describes the four major themes of improving population health outcomes, improving provider experience, improving consumers' experience, and improving the efficiency of health services and systems. These are shown in the figure below:

FIGURE 3: THE 'QUADRUPLE AIM' [4]



International, national, and state digital health strategies

Our Digital Health Strategy has recognised several important external state, national and international strategies that have provided insights and context to develop this work. These include:

The Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025 by the World Health Organization (WHO)

This highlights the existing and newly developed digital health networks for enhancing health outcomes through the use of digital health technologies by health consumers, health care providers and health professionals. This strategy applies to all countries including those with limited access to digital health to build an internationally connected digital health system.

The Global Strategy on Digital Health underscores the need to incorporate digital foundations within national strategies and collaborate with stakeholders at all

levels to include different nations respective of their needs and resources. However, investment in the least developed countries to overcome difficulties adopting digital health technologies needs to be considered and prioritised accordingly.^[6]

The National Digital Health Strategy – Safe, Seamless and Secure (2018-2022)

The governments of Australia established the Australian Digital Health Agency to align with global digital health strategic goals and prepare a digital health strategy for the nation. The National Digital Health Strategy^[5] emphasises the integration of digital health in the health system through innovation, collaboration and leadership.

It aims to benefit all Australians with a focus on seven strategic priority outcomes:

- Health information that is available whenever and wherever it is needed
- Health information that can be exchanged securely
- High-quality data with a commonly understood meaning that can be used with confidence
- Better availability and access to prescriptions and medicines information
- Digitally enabled models of care that improve accessibility, quality, safety, and efficiency
- A workforce confidently using digital health technologies to deliver health and care
- A thriving digital health industry delivering world class innovation.

The eHealth Strategy for NSW 2016-2026

Developed by NSW Health, this strategy was designed to ensure New South Wales has a digitally enabled and integrated health system delivering patient centred health experiences and quality health outcomes. It spanned a series of time horizons, anticipating change in the system and the changing needs of consumers and healthcare providers.

It has seven focus areas: Core clinical systems; Integrated care solutions; Workforce and Business Management Systems; Data and Analytics; Access to information; Infrastructure, Security, and Intelligence and Innovation.

It presents a 10-year program of innovation, investment and implementation and identifies the short, medium- and long-term goals for NSW Health. It aims to set a clear road map for stakeholders to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and drives coordination and partnerships among NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs), Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) and state-wide services.^[7]



The following guiding principles were used to guide the development of our digital health strategic objectives

Supporting benefits to community members, health providers and our region

The Strategy is designed to support the development of digital health and delivers health services that are appropriate to the needs of health providers in our region and benefits to all users of technologies in the broader health community.

Being affordable and accessible to all

The Strategy endeavours to support services that are fit for purpose, affordable to people and our system, and accessible to all stakeholders. This includes those with limited access to digital technologies, goods, and services.

Enabling self-care and self-determination

Education and digital health literacy are important to support community driven health maintenance. The Strategy also supports services that provide opportunities for health consumers to manage their own health and wellbeing through digital services and devices, as well as virtual care and self-care technologies.

Building for future focused technologies

The Strategy also needs to support innovation and the way our systems and services adapt to the future needs of digital consumers. We are likely to see a continuing expansion of technologies with a wider range of smart and connected devices. It also encompasses other uses of digital technologies for health such as the 'Internet of Things', advanced computing, big data analytics, and artificial intelligence, including machine learning and robotics.

Ensuring the privacy and security of our health data

The Strategy recognises that health data consists of sensitive personal data, and/or personally identifiable information, that requires a high safety and security standard. Therefore, it supports strong systems and processes to protect privacy, confidentiality, and the way personal health data is managed.

Creating an interoperable digital health ecosystem

An interoperable digital health ecosystem is required to enable the seamless and secure exchange of health data amongst users, health care providers, health systems managers, and health data services. It provides the ability to share data across systems ensuring standardised codes and definitions are used. The Strategy recognises interoperability as a key enabler of safe and high-quality future digital services, and a mitigation against poor quality records and the duplication of data. The strategy will support collaboration with digital partners in efforts to build further capabilities with interoperable applications.

Co-designing with our partners

Digital health services should be co-designed with the people identified as end users. They also need input from academic and industry partners who have expertise in digital service safety and quality, as well as development and delivery. The Strategy is designed to support working together with all these groups, which is vital to ensure success of our region's digital future.

Evaluating our success

The success of our digital services should be measured for value and for the benefits they bring to our stakeholders. A continual improvement cycle that is evidence-based should be established to ensure they deliver their anticipated benefits and evolve with the needs of users of digital technologies, both providers and the community.

5. THE STRATEGY'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Sydney North Health Network recognised a need to develop a Digital Health Strategy in 2020 and embarked upon a process to achieve this. This included establishing a steering group that guided strategy development, and included staff and members of our organisation, and external advice from health consumers and academic experts. Key guiding documents to support the strategy development included the WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025^[6], the National Digital Health Strategy^[5] and NSW Health's eHealth Strategy 2016-26^[7]. In addition, a number of international^[8, 9] and Australian examples^[10-12] of digital health strategies were reviewed.

A survey was developed and shared with clinical and community members for input on the vision and broad requirements of our Strategy. Stakeholders from our Consumer Advisory Council contributed their views on the following questions:

- What does good care look like to you?
- How might digital health deliver this to you?
- What are the opportunities for future technologies in healthcare?

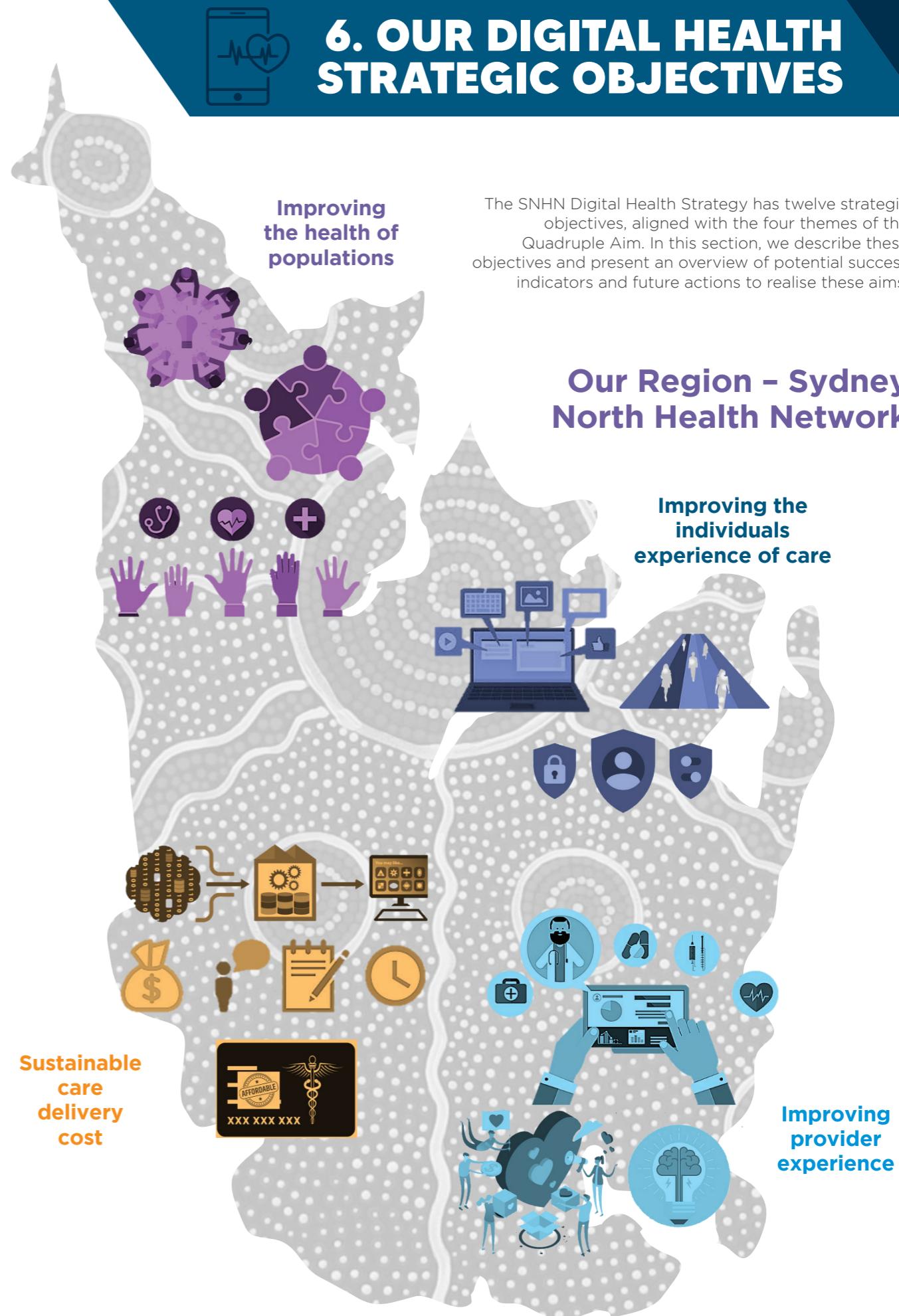
A range of healthcare providers provided feedback on an additional set of questions:

- What does digital health mean to you?
- What does the future of digital health look like to you?
- What opportunities do you see for healthcare that could be digitally enabled or expanded?

6. OUR DIGITAL HEALTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The SNHN Digital Health Strategy has twelve strategic objectives, aligned with the four themes of the Quadruple Aim. In this section, we describe these objectives and present an overview of potential success indicators and future actions to realise these aims.

Our Region – Sydney North Health Network



Improving the health of populations

Strengthening partnerships
Accessibility of health information
Research, innovation and co-design

Our objectives to improve the health of populations include:

- Strengthening community and health service partnerships
 - Ensure the support and development of digital health programs has strong community engagement and collaboration with other organisations aiming to deliver population benefits.
- Accessibility of population health information
 - Supports health service planning and ensures access to health information and services during emergency situations, for example, My Health Record, Telehealth, eReferral, ePathology, and ePrescribing.
- Digital health research, innovation, and co-design collaborations
 - Support collaboration with researchers and universities, as well as other innovation groups that create insights, test new digital health system designs, and examine data to improve health system intelligence.

Improving the individual's experience of care

Digital literacy
Consumer self care
Private, safe and secure health data

Our objectives to improve the individual's experience of care include:

- Community and provider digital literacy
 - Provide access to resources, co-design resources and provide consumer focused education to improve digital health literacy amongst consumers.
- Community needs driven and self-care supporting services
 - Supporting community members in managing and maintaining their own health, wellbeing, and prevention of disease using digital devices and services.
 - Supporting opportunities for the community to exercise self-determination in maintaining their health.
- Private, safe, and secure health data
 - Support and promote the safety and security of health data and the maintenance of confidentiality of health records.
 - Develop community trust in digital health technologies.

Improving provider experience

New and shared models of care
Interoperability and Accessibility
Information and knowledge management

Our objectives to improve provider experience include:

- Supporting shared and new models of care
 - Support and promote shared care, keeping the patient at the centre of the interactions between healthcare providers so that information and planning is available to all involved in the health of the patient
- Access to health information when and where it is needed
 - Promotion and support of digital tools and services that provides access to appropriate health information for health professionals and community members, at the time and place it is needed.
 - Collaboration with external stakeholders to support enhanced accessibility and interoperability between platforms with standardised coding and digital language.
- Health information knowledge management and provider education
 - Promoting the use of digital systems, devices, and technologies to enhance and simplify the experience of healthcare providers as they interact with the health system and support their effective management of knowledge, including but not limited to:
 - Auditing: knowing what knowledge you have and where knowledge is stored
 - Document (content) management: information architecture and maintenance
 - Knowledge operations: getting knowledge to where it is needed and keeping it safe.

Digital Maturity: How organised are you?



Efficient and sustainable care delivery

Affordability
Business development and funding
System transformation

Our objectives to improve the efficiency and sustainability of care delivery include:

- Provision of affordable digital technologies
 - Consider the affordability of digital health solutions when promoting or commissioning digital technologies for stakeholders.
- Business development and funding innovation
 - Pursue business development opportunities with other organisations and potential sources of funding to support the development of our digital health programs, for example, test beds and pilot projects.
- Digital health system transformation
 - Work with other digital health change leaders, governments (local, state, federal), consumer and community organisations to support system transformations to improve health and care.

"The My Health Record is proving particularly helpful in ascertaining precisely what medications have been dispensed to patients. Information from specialists, outside laboratories and radiology companies is massive but crucial to the assessment of each individual patient."

Dr Patrick Coleman, Specialist

7. DIGITAL HEALTH SUCCESS INDICATORS AND FUTURE ACTIONS

Summarised below are our four theme areas with their three key strategic objectives, and a description of high-level actions and success indicators:

THEMES	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE...
Improving the health of populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening community and health service partnerships• Accessibility of population health information• Digital health research, innovation, and co-design collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnerships are established (e.g., with local councils, community services, community groups) to develop and facilitate communication about digital health systems, services, and solutions.• SNHN collaborates with government, health providers and vendors to provide access to population health information• Research on digital health systems and services is supported and promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SNHN is actively contributing to and influencing the development of a patient-centred health system that prioritises digital health operational practices and infrastructure solutions that facilitate continuity of care• SNHN is working collaboratively with national and state government departments and agencies, vendors, health providers and the community to promote digital health awareness and use• SNHN is recognised by members, providers, stakeholders, and the broader community as a primary healthcare leader in digital health
Improving the individuals experience of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community and provider digital literacy• Community needs driven and self-care supporting services• Private, safe, and secure health data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communities and networks are supported to become informed and access resources that utilise digital health solutions• Implementation of digital and virtual healthcare solutions (My Health Record, telehealth, and remote patient monitoring) are prioritised and supported to become core elements of high quality, safe care delivery• Policies and procedures are developed and promoted to ensure data security, privacy and safety is maintained in the planning and implementation of digital health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The community understands and utilises digital health systems, services, and solutions• Core digital elements of primary healthcare delivery are embedded in the workflow of healthcare professionals• Consumers and providers are comfortable their health data is private, safe, and secure.

8. NEXT STEPS

Improving provider experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting shared and new models of care Access to health information when and where it is needed Health information knowledge management and provider education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNHN implements digital health programs to address the physical and mental health needs of vulnerable communities SNHN works with vendors, community, and government to improve information access for health providers Education and support services are developed and delivered to support primary healthcare providers to better understand and utilise digital health systems, services, and solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNHN is commissioning digital health projects and programs that support and empower vulnerable communities SNHN is recognised as an influencer in the development of digital health systems, services and solutions that support meaningful improvements in healthcare practice Primary healthcare providers are supported to actively plan for and engage with digital health systems, services, and solutions
Efficient and sustainable care delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of affordable digital technologies Business development and funding innovation Digital health system transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with entities to grow our expertise, share ideas, and strengthen our capacity to communicate broadly on digital health Seek business partners and funding to support the implementation of digital health infrastructure and operations New and innovative models of digital healthcare delivery, infrastructure, and operational processes are explored and supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use our trusted voice to actively promote digital health services, systems, and solutions SNHN is working with multiple business partners. The funding to support the implementation of digital health programs and initiatives is continually expanding. SNHN is host to a number of digital health pilot initiatives that are trialling new and innovative models of digital healthcare delivery

Overcoming the barriers

The digital health environment continues to rapidly change. Our community's needs for new technologies and self-care tools are greater than ever in the face of our current global COVID-19 pandemic. This creates challenges for community and health care providers and those developing and delivering digital systems. It strengthens the imperative to adapt and monitor our successes and failures and ensure that we are investing wisely in digital technologies and services now and in the future.

Barriers to success in digital health services were identified in our survey by community members and clinicians. They included issues such as a lack of interoperability, a lack of simple, user-friendly services, and a lack of access to information. Providers also expressed anxiety about constantly needing to upgrade systems, having patients with poor digital literacy and access to technology, and a lack of communication with their colleagues.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by our members and other stakeholders, and listening to their feedback, are important parts of evaluating the success of our Strategy. Investment in rigorous evaluation and building an evidence base for informed decision making around future digital health investment is essential to the success of our Strategy and our region's future digital health systems and services.

Framework for future action

This Strategy offers high level actions and success indicators for our digital health strategic objectives. These require further development and planning, which will be undertaken in the form of a Digital Health Framework for Action.

This Framework will constitute a work plan with timelines that describes specific activities to support each strategic objective. It will be iterative and further developed each year to reflect funding and other opportunities that arise. It will outline our desired path for the delivery of initiatives that will help us realise the vision of this Strategy. It will describe these activities, their goals, methods for delivery, anticipated value to our community, methods to measure success, and detail other collaborating partners and responsibilities for delivery.

The Framework will be developed collaboratively with our community and SNHN members, other Primary Health Networks, governments, academia, and industry.

Digital health success for our region will require a sustained effort by our network and a strong focus on the issues we need to work together with others to lead to safer and better-connected care for the community we serve.

“The expansion of digital health solutions such as e-prescribing has been thoroughly welcomed by our pharmacy. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, e-prescribing has bridged the gap between general practice and the pharmacist to the benefit of the patient.”

Matthew Burton, Pharmacist

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“I've had a great experience using digital health technologies to manage my own health and wellbeing. This has saved me from retelling my story repeatedly.”

Gabriel Van Duinen, Community Member

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