

Concept Note

Project Title: Telegeriatrics

Name of Implementing Organization: Ministry of Health of Montenegro – Directorate for IPA and other project and health infrastructure

Contact Person for this Application: Ms Amra Pepić

Email Address and Telephone Number: amra.pepic@mzd.gov.me

Project Description:

What is the problem that this proposed project seeks to address?

Telegeriatrics enables the provision of healthcare to elderly individuals remotely. This allows older adults to receive medical care and support from the comfort of their homes, without the need to travel to healthcare facilities or meet healthcare professionals in person. Telegeriatrics is particularly important in situations where older adults cannot or do not want to travel due to health or other reasons. This approach can be especially beneficial in rural areas where such access to healthcare is particularly limited.

Telegeriatrics enables healthcare professionals to monitor patients in real-time, track their physical activity, nutrition, medication intake, and other health indicators, and facilitate remote consultations with healthcare providers using wearable technology and other digital health monitoring tools. This will improve care and quality of life for older adults while also reducing healthcare costs.

The approach is particularly applicable to the management of chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, which require constant monitoring, medication management, and lifestyle modifications. Telegeriatrics can play a key role in improving the management of these conditions by providing remote monitoring, virtual consultations with healthcare professionals, and medication reminders. By implementing a telegeriatric program focused on managing chronic diseases, the project can help older adults better manage their health, reduce hospital admissions, and improve their overall quality of life.

What are the goals of the project, and the activities that will be implemented toward those goals?

The aim of the project is to improve accessibility and efficiency of cross-border public healthcare services by investing in telemedicine and mobile assets, facilitating the transition from institution-based care to community-based care with a focus on older adults.

Activities:

- Conduct an analysis of the needs of older individuals for telegeriatrics services in cross-border areas.
- Implement a pilot project based on the conducted analysis, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of chronic patients.
- Provide necessary infrastructure for the telegeriatrics pilot project, including equipment procurement (internet connectivity equipment, wearable technology, and other digital health

monitoring tools for tracking vital signs and other health indicators, enabling remote consultations with healthcare professionals), software platforms with security protocols.

- Ensure that healthcare workers who will work with telegeriatric patients receive necessary training and knowledge to ensure the quality and safety of healthcare services provided.
- Secure funding for the personnel providing care alongside healthcare services provided within the project.
- Establish a telecommunication network enabling teleconferencing and other digital communication channels between patients and healthcare workers.
- Ensure the security and privacy of patients' personal data and establish security protocols to prevent misuse or unauthorized access to data.
- Measure the effectiveness of telegeriatrics services to ensure their sustainability and continuous development for application after the project's completion.
- Educate patients on the use of telegeriatrics services and provide support to ensure their understanding and acceptance of this mode of healthcare delivery.

Legal basis of the proposed project (laws and other legal regulations, EU regulations, strategic documents,etc.)

The Law on Health care protection (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 3/2016, 39/2016, 2/2017, 44/2018, 24/2019, 82/2020, 8/2021, 3/2023) enables the provision of services through telemedicine.

Article 30a

Healthcare institutions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of healthcare can provide healthcare services using telecommunication and information technologies, regardless of the geographical location of the healthcare provider, the citizen receiving the healthcare service, medical information, or equipment, with the transmission of medical data (telemedicine), in accordance with the law.

The Ministry shall prescribe the detailed conditions, organization, and manner of providing healthcare services pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article.

Healthcare Development Strategy in Montenegro for the period 2023-2027 - This document sets guidelines and priorities for healthcare development in Montenegro, including digitization and improving access to healthcare services, thus supporting the implementation of telegeriatrics projects.

Montenegro Economic Reform Programme 2022-2024 - ERP is primarily oriented towards the development and implementation of a central information system - a unique CIS system, along with the implementation of the necessary hardware and software infrastructure. Therefore, additional focus is placed on the development of telemedicine systems - Development of protocols and procedures for the optimal application of telemedicine, as well as conducting the trainings intended for medical personnel in charge for using digital systems.

What is the expected impact of the project?

The project will contribute to better and more efficient healthcare for the elderly, especially those with chronic illnesses, with a particular focus on those residing in rural areas of Montenegro.

How will this project be monitored and evaluated?

The project will be overseen by the Ministry of Health with the support of health centers in Montenegro in the program area. Within the Ministry of Health, there is a structured organizational unit - a directorate tasked with implementing both national and cross-border IPA projects.

Project Staff

Please outline the qualifications and experience of your organization and the project team as they are related to your project plan and goals.

The Ministry of Health has experience with the implementation of cross-border projects, but also experience in the implementation of the national IPA.

At the first call, we successfully implemented the NeurNet project (<https://www.interreg-hr-ba-me.eu/project/neurnet/>) with partners from Croatia (Institute for Emergency Medicine (previously Institute for Telemedicine) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federal Ministry of Health).

Apart from this project, we were also involved in the AdriHealthMob project (<https://innopolis.org/projects/adrihealthmob/>), which was part of the IPA Adriatic Program where we collaborated with the Croatian Ministry of Health.

Additionally, we were involved in the PHASE Project ([Home | PHASE \(italy-albania-montenegro.eu\)](http://Home | PHASE (italy-albania-montenegro.eu))) which was a part of the Interreg IPA Italy-Albania-Montenegro.