Philips and Enovation to connect hospital XDS networks to enable digital exchange of patient data on a national scale

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An XDS network enables healthcare institutions to exchange patient data digitally in a standardised and secure manner
- On a regional level, XDS networks are already used by a limited number of collaborating hospitals to exchange patient data: this new initiative will enable national exchange.
- On a national level, patient data is still often exchanged by means of DVDs, USB sticks, fax or on paper

Philips (based in Eindhoven) and Enovation (based in Capelle aan den Ijssel), suppliers of XDS networks, have taken the initiative to proactively connect hospitals with existing XDS networks. In this way, both parties will make it possible to exchange patient data on a national scale. This development is supported by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS). Many hospitals in the Netherlands have an XDS infrastructure at their disposal, which allows for the digital and secure exchange of data, provided that the hospitals' networks are linked. On a regional level, some cooperating hospitals already have linked XDS networks to digitally exchange patient data with each other.

Secure and standardised exchange of patient data
The objective of XDS (Cross-enterprise Document Sharing) is to enable the exchange of patient data between healthcare institutions in a standardised and secure manner. This mainly concerns medical images and documents such as reports and letters. With this new initiative, Philips and Enovation will facilitate the national exchange of patient data. The exchange of patient data by hospitals on a national level now often happens on an ad-hoc basis and physically by means of DVDs, USB sticks, fax or on paper.

"The COVID-19 crisis has once again highlighted the importance of enabling digital exchange of patient data within a structural nationwide network," said Henk Valk, CEO at Philips Benelux. "Together with Enovation we will work on accelerating the scaling up of national data exchange, so that hospitals that use an XDS infrastructure can exchange patient data digitally on a national scale. With the support of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, we will be working hard in the near future to make the digital exchange of patient data possible on a national level in a safe manner. In doing so, we will collaborate with national initiatives."

"The need to exchange better and more information is becoming stronger," says Jeroen van Rijswijk, CEO at Enovation. "This is driven on the one hand by the growing pressure on healthcare and on the other by the COVID-19 crisis. We are therefore very proud to be able to take this step forward. By joining forces as market parties, we can really accelerate the national exchange. We look forward to putting this into practice in the coming period."

Making technical agreements for uniform connection
Research by Philips and Enovation shows that 80% of Dutch hospitals have invested recently in an XDS infrastructure for the digital exchange of patient data. In order to exchange patient data nationwide, the XDS infrastructures of the hospitals must be interconnected. This takes a lot of time. A series of agreements must be made for each new link. However, there is as yet no harmonised method for linking XDS infrastructures. In several steps, Philips and Enovation are working towards a national and uniform technical connection.

In a 'proof of concept phase', Philips and Enovation will jointly determine which technical agreements must be made in order to make a link between the mutual XDS infrastructures possible. In the second phase the aim is to make these agreements publicly available. In the third phase, the parties intend to use these agreements to link hospitals.

Coherence of national initiatives

For the realisation of an exchange on a national scale, an important role is reserved for national and supplier-transcending initiatives and facilities (such as national permission facility, unity of language and the healthcare address book) that are developed within programmes such as Twiin and MITZ. Through this collaboration, Philips and Enovation are actively helping to accelerate these initiatives by technically linking the existing XDS networks and making the technical details public. In this way both parties aim to make a positive contribution to the creation of a national exchange infrastructure.

💬 More information?

For more information, please contact us at info.co.uk@enovationgroup.com or +44 (0)8445 61 18 14.