

Developing a Competency Framework for Health Informatics in Zambia: A Multidisciplinary Approach Towards Enhancing Healthcare

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Introduction:

Health informatics, an interdisciplinary field that applies technology and information management to healthcare, is of increasing global significance. As healthcare delivery becomes increasingly digitized, the need for health informatics professionals escalates. However, in Zambia, this critical function is currently being performed by personnel from other professions, underscoring the pressing need to develop this specific skillset in the country. The Ministry of Health, the University of Zambia (UNZA), and other key stakeholders have recognized this need and are taking active steps to foster health informatics competencies in Zambia.

Methodology:

A multidisciplinary consultative workshop was conducted, consisting of stakeholders from various domains to draft a competency framework for health informatics. The process involved thorough examination of existing models, facilitated discussions, and iterative refinement of the proposed structure.

Results:

The resulting competency framework identified six main domains critical to health informatics: Information Technology, Information Science, Clinical Health, Public Health, Leadership & Management, and Workforce Development. Furthermore, 29 sub-domains were delineated, and their corresponding competencies defined. This framework will guide educational institutions in the development of health informatics curricula, serving to build a highly skilled workforce capable of meeting Zambia's health informatics needs.

Conclusion:

The development of this competency framework marks a significant milestone in Zambia's healthcare sector. The Higher Education Authority will assume custodianship of the framework, ensuring its continuous improvement and adaptation to the dynamic healthcare environment. This framework will empower the next generation of health informatics professionals in Zambia, bridging the current gap and enhancing healthcare service delivery. The implementation of this framework holds immense potential for the transformation of health informatics in Zambia, thus meeting the increasing demand and driving improvements in public health outcomes.