

HealthTech Workshop

6th October 2016

Introduction

Political Intelligence, Hotwire and Device Access convened a healthtech workshop on 6th October 2016, chaired by Dame Barbara Hakin, former Deputy Chief Executive of NHS England. A range of representatives involved in health economics, reimbursement, market access, sales and marketing attended the workshop.

This document provides an overview of discussions held during the workshop, which focused on the common roadblocks and challenges facing the industry as a whole; and how the industry can work together better to resolve these, possibly in the form of a healthtech alliance.

Common roadblocks and challenges facing the industry

Delegates discussed the current issues facing the healthtech industry and focused on the following themes:

- **The NHS and its financial difficulties:** the NHS is facing one of its toughest times in terms of financial constraint, with funding not keeping up with demand. With an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of preventable diseases, the NHS is only likely to face further financial difficulties;
- **Politicisation of the NHS:** Historically there has been significant amount of top-down re-organisation by different political parties, harming long-term strategic thinking on the adoption of life-saving health technology. The ongoing political debate threatens future stability;
- **Increasing fragmentation:** since the Health and Social Care Act, decision-making has dispersed (both locally and nationally) creating more complex routes to market, confusion around appropriate reimbursement pathways and frustration amongst industry in communicating their concerns effectively with the decision-makers.
- **Discrepancies between policy and delivery:** The pressure on current resources within the NHS, means there is often a disconnect between the policy goals and the operational reality.
- **The routes to market and general perception of Health technology are not proportionate to the health outcomes they can provide:** especially compared to routes to market for the pharmaceutical sector;
- **Smaller companies are locked-out:** the value-based approach to reimbursement is locking out smaller companies.
- **The industry's communications:** the industry does not do enough to communicate the benefits of their products and services;
- **The NHS does not share best practice as well as it should:** meaning that hospitals in the same locality are slow to adopt the same beneficial technologies.

How can the industry work better together?

The idea of companies in the health technology sector coming together and forming a collective forum in the form of an alliance was discussed.

Such an alliance would involve companies seeking to lobby senior NHS England decision-makers to deliver reimbursement and market access solutions to the betterment of the entire industry and ultimately the NHS and patients.

Delegates believed that an alliance could only work if it:

- Sought to influence how the NHS and health technology policy operated nationally;
- Focused on a few common issues (initially) which affected the entire industry;
- Committed to being inclusive – by working with one-another in sharing best-practice, worked with other organisations involved in healthtech and sought to educate the NHS and helping the health service and industry share best practice;
- Focused on delivering effective solutions for the NHS and patients.

Such an alliance would have to be nimble, focused on achieving a limited set of objectives at any one time and inclusive if it were to succeed.

Delegates agreed that further information on how such an alliance might operate was required to make an informed decision.

Concluding statements

Delegates were thanked for their attendance and input at the workshop. Political Intelligence agreed that a brief summary of the workshop's discussions would be circulated together with further details of what the terms of reference of an alliance might look like.