

THCS Annual Conference 2024

29 and 30 November 2024 Bruxelles



The Transforming Health & Care Systems (THCS) Partnership convened its **second Annual** Conference on November 28 and 29 in Brussels at the Committee of the Region. The two-day event brought together experts and stakeholders from across Europe to discuss groundbreaking initiatives in health system transformation, offering participants a unique platform to explore innovative projects, cross-sector collaboration, and strategies to overcome shared challenges.

Structured into four sessions, the event delved into key themes: integrating evidence into policy making, fostering transformative ecosystems, showcasing the impactful projects funded under the Joint Transnational Call (JTC) 2023, and strengthening collaboration across EU-funded health partnerships.

The conference emphasized the importance of balancing localized efforts with broader EU-wide objectives. It highlighted actionable strategies for systemic transformation, showcasing examples of effective regional innovation, cross-border cooperation, and interdisciplinary research. Participants discussed how partnerships, funding models, and stakeholder engagement can collectively address complex challenges, from workforce shortages to health inequalities.

The event concluded with a **forward-looking discussion on the role of EU partnerships in shaping the future of healthcare**, with a focus on building synergies, **fostering collaboration**, and ensuring that innovative solutions translate into real-world impact.

Hereafter, you will find a report of the event, including the key messages that emerged during the conference, organized by session.

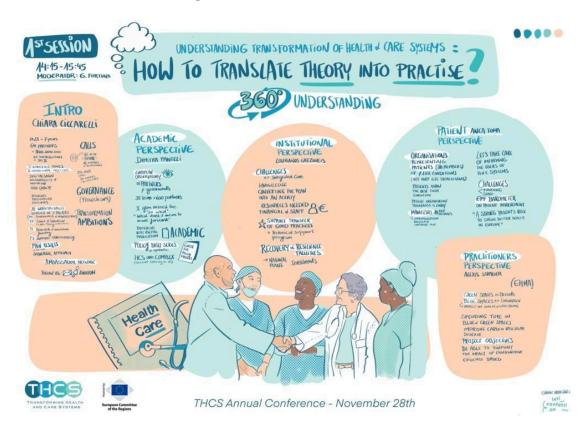




I SESSION – Understanding transformation of health and care systems: how to translate theory into practice

How can academic research drive health system transformation? Which is the role of Institutions? Why is patient engagement essential in health system transformation? How do practitioners address health and environmental interconnections? These and other questions drove the discussion in this engaging high-profile session. Each perspective offered a unique contribution, putting in evidence that collaboration is the key to create a holistic approach to achieving sustainable and equitable health improvements.

The academic perspective underscores the critical role of evidence-based policymaking. By leveraging structured frameworks and a vast network of European experts, academics aim to bridge the gap between research and policy. Their work includes analyzing health systems, developing transformation strategies, and addressing systemic challenges through innovative ideas. Institutions should support reforming primary care and integrating digital health solutions that should include readiness assessments and funding mechanisms to foster person-centered care. Patients and caregivers bring in valuable insights to the health system, informed by their lived experiences. The session stressed the need for tools to measure patient participation and emphasized empowering patient organizations with sustainable funding to enhance their influence in decision-making. Innovations from practitioners showcased projects that explore the health benefits of natural environments like green and blue spaces. These initiatives rely on evidence-based approaches and geospatial tools, but also highlight the need to address inequities in access to these health-enhancing environments.







Evidence-based frameworks must guide health system reforms

Such frameworks enable health systems to address complex challenges in a systematic and adaptive manner. To ensure the maximum impact they can provide a structured path from problem identification to strategic planning and regulatory implementation.

Sustainable funding is essential

EU and national policies play a critical role in fostering transformation also with relevant financial and human resources, but it is necessary to improve strategic coordination and funding.

Patient experiences and input are vital for designing responsive health and care systems

Participants noted that patient organizations, often underfunded and reliant on private sources, require sustainable public funding to ensure their voices are heard. Tools such as barometers to measure patient involvement can identify barriers and best practices, creating a roadmap for greater inclusion.

• Scalable innovations should address systemic inequalities to ensure inclusive health outcomes

Innovation in health systems, particularly in projects exploring the impact of environmental factors on health, was presented as a scalable solution. However, equitable access remains a challenge, especially for underserved populations. Policymakers must consider accessibility in their designs to prevent widening health inequalities.





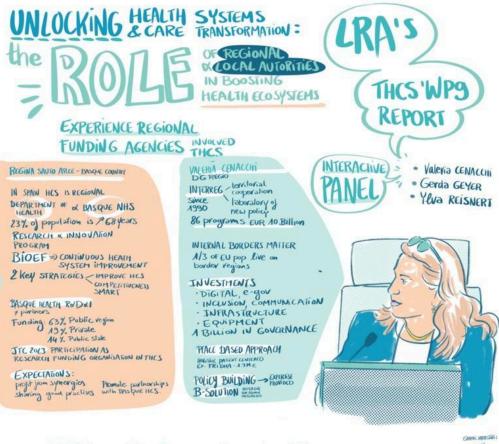
II SESSION - Unlocking Health & Care systems transformation: the role of regional and local authorities in boosting health ecosystems

What defines a transformative health ecosystem? How relevant is the regional dimension? Panelists highlighted the **importance of engagement, transparency, and inclusivity**. Regional initiatives must align with national and EU goals to create long-term impacts.

The discussion also explored cross-border collaboration as a driver of systemic improvements. Projects such as integrated care models and coordinated initiatives between regions demonstrate the value of shared governance and investment. Yet, challenges persist in harmonizing efforts across different legal and administrative systems.

Innovative funding models tied to measurable outcomes were presented as a key strategy to ensure accountability and scalability. By linking resources to results, regions can prioritize impactful initiatives and optimize investments.









THCS Annual Conference - November 28th





Transformative Ecosystems drive innovation

Health ecosystems thrive on flexibility, transparency, and inclusivity, making them powerful tools for innovation. They balance local engagement with measurable outcomes, fostering collaboration across sectors. Projects like THCS exemplify how these ecosystems can be integrated into health systems, creating sustainable and impactful solutions. For ecosystems to succeed, they must integrate micro (local), meso (organizational), and macro (policy) levels. Citizen engagement, shared goals, and ongoing monitoring are crucial to proving their value and driving large-scale change. Ecosystems need adaptability and collaboration to overcome funding and policy hurdles.

• Regional Agencies are crucial for systemic change

Regions like the Basque Country demonstrate how localized strategies can address global health challenges, such as aging populations and personalized medicine. Regional agencies leverage public and competitive funding to innovate, share best practices, and collaborate with European programs, enhancing health systems across borders. EU initiatives like Interreg reveal the challenges and opportunities of fostering health equity in diverse regions. By supporting integrated care models, addressing legal and cultural barriers, and promoting capacity building, these efforts advance patient-centered solutions and improve access to services.

Networks Enhance Regional EU Collaboration

Regional networks, such as ERRIN, are pivotal in connecting local authorities to European funding and research opportunities. By fostering dialogue and providing development support, they help members address pressing health priorities, ensuring that regions can fully participate in transformative health initiatives.





III SESSION - Presentation of THCS' JTC 2023 Funded Projects

The third session highlighted the **transformative potential of projects funded under the Joint Transnational Call (JTC) 2023:** four initiatives exemplify how research and innovation can address systemic health challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration. The projects span a range of topics, addressing critical gaps in transitional care, neonatal health, chronic wound management, and digital solutions for chronic diseases. A recurring theme is the importance of leveraging technology, such as Al and IoT, to improve care quality, enhance patient engagement, and optimize resource allocation.

Equally significant is the emphasis on stakeholder collaboration, with each project drawing on multidisciplinary teams and engaging end-users to ensure solutions are practical, adaptable, and impactful. The integration of robust communication strategies demonstrates a shared commitment to transparency and dissemination, ensuring that scientific evidence reaches policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the public.

These initiatives exemplify THCS's mission to foster a more efficient, patient-centered, and resilient healthcare ecosystem, paving the way for future innovations.







Innovative technologies transform care delivery

The projects showcased at the THCS Annual Conference demonstrate how advanced technologies such as AI, IoT, and digital platforms can address critical gaps in healthcare delivery. By enabling personalized interventions, remote monitoring, and enhanced decision-making, these innovations are transforming care models to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. **TransCare Project** is an example of how AI-driven digital assistance and IoT technologies can provide non-invasive remote patient monitoring (RPM) tailored to individual needs. This innovative approach addresses a critical gap in healthcare by preventing fragmentation and ensuring personalized interventions. Their scalability across diverse systems underscores the adaptability of technological solutions to meet varied regional needs.

• Patient-Centered models are key to sustainable healthcare

The emphasis on patient-centered care across all projects highlights the shift toward models that prioritize the individual's needs and experiences. From transitional care for older adults to home-based monitoring of neonatal jaundice with the IDjaundice@home Project, these initiatives empower patients and families to take an active role in their health. Digital-CACTUS reimagines chronic disease management by addressing inefficiencies in the patient journey and integrating tailored digital interventions. The project develops evidence-based tools to identify "pain points" in patient-clinician interactions and optimize self-monitoring and telehealth solutions. ICAREWOUNDS addresses a significant challenge in chronic wound (CW) care, integrating Al-powered platforms to improve early detection, streamline care coordination, and reduce recovery times. These approaches enhance engagement, satisfaction, and health outcomes, aligning with broader goals of making care more accessible for patients and efficient.

Stakeholder engagement drives ecosystem transformation

Successful implementation of these projects relies on collaboration across diverse stakeholders, including healthcare providers, researchers, patients, and policymakers. By involving multidisciplinary teams in design and execution, the projects ensure that solutions are aligned with real-world challenges and scalable across different healthcare systems.

THCS as a catalyst for health system transformation

The THCS partnership provides a platform for pioneering projects that address pressing challenges in healthcare. Through funding, collaboration, and dissemination support, THCS fosters an environment where transformative ideas can flourish. The projects funded by the 2023 Joint Transnational Call exemplify the program's commitment to driving systemic change, with the potential to set benchmarks for future health and care innovations.





IV SESSION - Shaping the Future: a dialogue on European Partnerships in Health

The final session explored the potential for synergies between EU-funded health partnerships. Effective collaboration, participants argued, requires clear communication, alignment of research agendas, and shared tools for capacity building. Partnerships must balance their unique goals with the collective aim of transforming health systems.

What practical steps can improve collaboration? Proposals included centralized information portals to streamline access to resources and joint training programs to build capacity. Panelists emphasized the importance of inclusive approaches, involving patients, practitioners, and policymakers, to ensure the relevance and success of innovations.

The term "synergy" was discussed to identify actionable strategies, such as joint forecasting, shared roadmaps, and coordinated funding calls. While overlaps between partnerships remain a challenge, structured mechanisms for cooperation could optimize outcomes.







Collaboration enhances impact

By aligning goals, sharing best practices, and pooling resources, partnerships can address systemic health challenges more effectively. Examples such as Innovative Health Initiative (IHI) demonstrate how coordinated efforts can accelerate the adoption of health innovations. Regular cross-partnership meetings and webinars can ensure sustained dialogue and continuous learning, enabling partnerships to tackle overlapping priorities while avoiding duplication. Collaboration remains a cornerstone for achieving meaningful and scalable health system transformations.

Leveraging complementary strengths

Each partnership brings unique expertise and perspectives, from ERA4Health's focus on policies to JPIAMR's integrated approach to antimicrobial resistance. Leveraging these complementary strengths can drive innovation and create synergies that benefit the broader health ecosystem. For instance, partnerships with non-health sectors, such as agriculture and clean energy, were identified as opportunities to address interconnected challenges. By capitalizing on these diverse strengths, partnerships can develop holistic solutions that integrate technological, social, and environmental dimensions into health system reforms.

Policy alignment is critical for success

The success of EU health partnerships depends on their alignment with overarching EU health priorities and frameworks. The panel highlighted that ensuring partnerships support strategic goals, such as antimicrobial resistance reduction and digital health innovation, maximizes their relevance and impact. Joint programming efforts, such as those planned under FP10, aim to align research funding and policy implementation more closely. Tools like ERA initiatives and shared platforms were proposed as mechanisms to enhance coherence and facilitate coordinated policy actions across partnerships.

