

# Integrating Innovation and Digital Health into Current Health IT Curriculums

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As technology advances, telehealth is more likely to play a significant role in regular care delivery for future doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and other healthcare staff. The pandemic has shifted telemedicine from being an option to a necessity nationwide. As telehealth consultations and remote care continue to be adopted throughout healthcare, it is vital to incorporate telehealth and other digital health concepts within current education. Telehealth is an evolving discipline, and it is important the education domain keeps up with it. Health IT and Health Informatics educational courses should ensure that the curriculum is up to date with current practices and telehealth should be a major focus.

As a student in a Master's in Health IT program, I would recommend several changes that could be implemented to make education more relevant and successful. The Health IT program currently has no course that focuses entirely on telehealth, digital health and technology innovation, but it should. The course needs to cover not only the basics of telehealth and telemedicine but also the tools and sources used by doctors and patients. Additionally, current classes use textbooks that are outdated and do not account for the current changes that have occurred in healthcare. The current courses for Health informatics I and II are using a textbook that was published in 2014. The textbooks need to be up to date with the current changes in the health system. Even though teachers are providing some sources that are current events and news articles, it is vital for the program to utilize and teach from recently published textbooks and online materials to provide students with the most current information.

Furthermore, most of the courses within the program focus on health informatics issues, quality improvement, policies, and management principles. Even though the courses are highly informative, much of the material is theory-based rather than application-based. For example, EHRs concepts are covered in most of the courses, however, none of the courses allow students to apply their knowledge and work with real EHRs. There should be workshops and apprenticeships that give each student an opportunity to have hands-on experience with the tools and software used in healthcare. Rather than having classes that are all theory-based, there need to be practical implications, so students are well prepared for working in the healthcare industry.

For Health IT programs to be more successful, they need to consider the fact that healthcare is evolving and changing every day. The same lecture slides, projects, exams, and quizzes are being reused every year. Teachers need to adjust their curriculum every semester based on the current changes and healthcare policies being implemented. Overall, I recommend having up-to-date resources for students, hands-on training, and a larger focus on digital health, which is where our healthcare system is rapidly heading towards.

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