



## Press Release

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# Advancing EU healthcare through new and emerging digital technologies: DDS-MAP project kicks off

**15 partners from 10 EU countries, led by Southeast Technological University (SETU), formed a consortium under the acronym DDS-MAP. Dynamic Digital Resilience for Medical and Allied Professions in Health Services (DDS-MAP), a new project co-funded by the European Union under EU4Health program which aims to revolutionise healthcare training and development in the European Union.**

COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine are harbingers of a more destabilised world driven by climate change, rapid mass migration, food insecurity, state failures and epidemics. These events will heavily affect Europe's health systems' infrastructure and health workforce. On the other hand, health care professionals often lack sufficient knowledge, training, and skills to engage effectively with digital technologies.

As a result, they are often stressed when dealing with these technologies. Aiming to address the challenges arising from the wide use of digital and electronic technologies in the multi-disciplinary health care environment across the EU, the DDS-MAP formed a Pan-European consortium consisting of HEIs (Medical, Nursing, Education and Digital Technology), NGOs, health authorities and health insurers across the EU.

Officially kicked-off on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the consortium partners met for the first time in Waterford on April 27-28<sup>th</sup> for the kick-off meeting. Professor Dianne Cooney Miner and Dr Patricia Gaitlin St John Fisher University, Rochester, NY, USA presented applied examples of using VR for clinical training. In addition, Professor William Donnelly welcomed the advisory board members who will assess and validate the project results. Finally, the consortium partners took the opportunity to explore Walton VR Photometry Lab of SETU.

The EU4Health programme aims to improve and foster health in the EU, strengthen health systems and pave the way for a stronger, healthier and more resilient Health Union. The DDS-MAP project will embed awareness, knowledge and self-reflection about their engagement and use of digital technologies in both the learning and professional practice of health care professionals. DDS-MAP will conduct a survey of digital competencies across the EU, assessing the training needs and capabilities of health care professionals to inform the development and delivery of a bespoke training portfolio. This will consist of three generic modules that can be adapted to the needs of the multiple disciplines within the health workforce, and a fourth module focused on resilience and wellbeing.

Prof John Wells, Dean of the School of Health Sciences at SETU in Waterford and project leader explained the importance of this work. DDS-MAP recognises that health services are increasingly dependent on digital technologies to deliver both, high end and day to day care and services. DDS-MAP, informed by and supporting the European Pact for Skills, aims to address these challenges by equipping the health workforce with knowledge and a skill set that will give them confidence in



adapting to rapid technological change and in managing the consequences of digital disruption to services when these occur.

In addition to the implementation of a pan European survey, DDS-MAP has two other unique features. It will employ micro-credentialing to assess and reward skills development in the clinical setting. It will also use Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) as key teaching and assessment technologies.

**For More Information, please contact:**

**Professor John Wells, PhD, FAAN, FFMRC SI**  
**Project Coordinator**  
**Dean School of Health Sciences**  
**Southeast Technological University, O'Connell Bianconi Building,**  
**Cork Road Campus, Waterford City, Ireland, X91 N2FP.**

+353 51 834092 [John.Wells@setu.ie](mailto:John.Wells@setu.ie)  
[www.setu.ie/healthsciences](http://www.setu.ie/healthsciences)

**Florian Scheibein**  
**Research Assistant**  
**Southeast Technological University**  
**O'Connell Bianconi Building, Cork Road, Waterford City, Ireland**

+353 85 1122345 [florian.scheibein@setu.ie](mailto:florian.scheibein@setu.ie)  
[www.wit.ie/healthsciences](http://www.wit.ie/healthsciences)

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