NHSX: Transforming Healthcare Digitalisation

NHSX, created by the UK government early this year , is leading the way in transforming healthcare through digitisation. The agency's primary aim is to bring the benefits of modern technology to every patient and clinician, such as early disease diagnosis and timely treatment, as well as reducing the burden on medical staff.

You might also like: Digitalising Healthcare

For his part, Dr Sam Shah, Director of Digital Development at NHSX, is bringing a new dimension to healthcare's digital transformation, starting with the important role of digital leadership and the right mindset.

"At NHSX now there's a sea change, a tide has come along around not just technology, not just IT but really digital leadership and mindset. That's the big difference here...that culture is beginning to float with the system – around understanding the users, their needs, their different way of working," Dr Shah told a recent interview with HIMSS TV.

He went on to say that by turning this philosophy into everything that we do, "it becomes more than just technology but actually more of a behavioural change." And promoting this kind of digital culture is certainly an effective way to make health workers become digital-ready.

In his new role at NHSX, Dr Shah is focused on using digital technology to optimise access to health services, improve the patient and user experience, and increase the health system's efficiency while getting the best outcomes for patients.

Data is Key

However, it is common knowledge that outdated technologies – including fax machines – remain in use throughout the NHS . As such, patients are not getting the care they need because their data does not follow them round the health system.

Now, with the NHS move towards digital technology, patients have the chance to access their data and information digitally to get engaged, to get involved, and to really take responsibility for their health and care.

Prior to his current post at NHSX, Dr Shah worked in a host of different places – retail, banking and law. Such varied experience has enriched his view and understanding about the customer, the consumer.

"What's most interesting, in the late 1990s and early 2000s that's when the consumer really became king in [the retail] environment. We had the boom of the likes of Amazon at that time; we have a lot of others that came into the scene. At that point when everyone had to change, they recognised that the consumer wanted a different relationship – they wanted more ownership of their own journey through that retail experience," he points out. "It didn't happen overnight, but certainly seeing that putting things into the hands of the consumer they can make better decisions, and this has changed the history as it is today."

The same kind of data-driven change in consumer behaviour also occurred in the banking sector. "Once it's unheard of that you can access your bank statement anywhere, anytime to examine it, let alone actually start transacting. But at that point, designing those things allowed people to make better decisions," says Dr Shah. "And now people make decisions based on viewing information. So I think there's [an example] here that we can take from other sectors and apply into our transformation in healthcare."

He laments the fact that, at present, our public health approach has been around population health needs that are often premised on those people that have attended and accessed healthcare services.

"But digitisation gives us data on all these individuals – how they shop, how they behave, and even those who don't present in the health system. So I think the opportunity here is the access [to data] of our population in a different way and [for NHSX] to bring digitisation towards modifying and changing health service," according to Dr Shah.

Indeed, that's how technology and data are empowering the patient (as consumer) to have greater control of their healthcare experience.

Source: HIMSS TV

Image Credit: iStock

Published on : Mon, 14 Oct 2019