

## Workforce Shortages, Retention and Burnout



ANALYSIS - EVALUATION - OPPORTUNITIES - KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### **Driss Seffar**

Workforce Shortage or Workforce Mismatch? Bridging the Generational Divide in a Post-Pandemic World

### **Diane Whitehouse**

Building a Digitally Competent Workforce in Health and Care: Insights from European Regions

### **Manu L. N. G. Malbrain, Béatrice Schaad, Michel Bafort**

Human Errors: Why Doctors Make Mistakes – From Blaming to Learning

### **Josie Rudman**

The NHS Workforce: A Fragile Foundation for Future Reform

### **Begoña San José**

Kintsugi Leadership: Repairing the Broken Healthcare Workforce from Within

### **Dilini Sandamali**

Building a Sustainable Nursing Workforce: A Comprehensive Approach to Staff Retention

### **Dr. Ian Weissman, Maria Ortlieb**

Strategies to Mitigate Radiology Workforce Shortage



# Building a Digitally Competent Workforce in Health and Care: Insights from European Regions

Europe's health and care systems are accelerating digital upskilling, with BeWell mapping 180+ courses and piloting 20 programmes. Regional case studies, from Flanders' Alivia pilots to Campania's anti-microbial resistance training, show how AI awareness, data analysis skills, interprofessional teamwork and strong leadership embed digital tools in daily practice and build confident, future-ready workforces.



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## key points

- BeWell maps 180+ digital skills courses for health staff.
- Twenty pilot programmes allow staff and students to trial new training.
- Flanders pilots Alivia to support goal-oriented, integrated care.
- Campania trains teams to tackle antimicrobial resistance.
- AI awareness and data analysis emerge as priority skills.

The September 2025 State of the Union address by European Commission President, Ursula Von Der Leyen, included many important, pressing messages (European Commission 2025a). Among her messages, Ms Von Der Leyen reinforced Europe's need to invest in digital tech. Key among these technologies is artificial intelligence (AI), a core technology that can help fuel Europe's economy. From a health and care perspective, however, members of the workforce need to know more about how AI functions and what AI can offer them. Many other skills are also needed to help medical, clinical and care personnel to learn about digital technologies. One European project that can assist with this challenge is the BeWell project.

## Introducing the Need for Digitally Competent Workforces

BeWell ([bewell-project.eu](http://bewell-project.eu)) is a four-year project on upskilling and reskilling in digital skills for members of the health and care workforces which also has a focus on green skills training. BeWell offers support to the European Pact for Skills, now known as the Union of Skills (European Commission 2025d) – an initiative which invests in people in order to build a competitive European Union (EU). The project is financed by the EU's Erasmus+ programme (European Commission 2025c). Since May 2025, BeWell is completing its final year of activity.

Internationally, a growing number of policy briefs on digitally competent health

## AND WHAT DID WE LEARN?

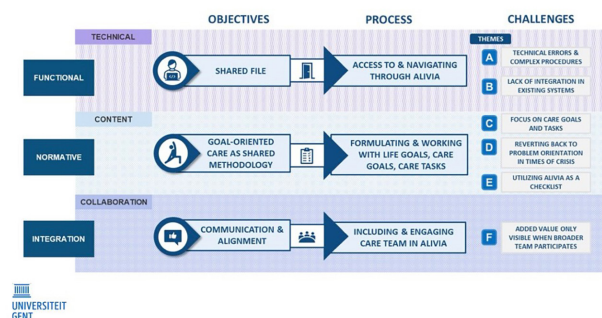


Figure 1: “And what did we learn?” – Alivia first stage of pilot in Flanders, Belgium

and care workforces is emerging. In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe emphasised the importance of digital health technologies for the health and care workforce (eg WHO 2023) after surveying its 53 country members on what each was doing on

“Members of the workforce need to know more about how AI functions and what AI can offer them.”

digital health. In September 2025, in what is likely to become a more concise policy document, the WHO reinforced the fact that many organisational and human factors are needed to assist with digital health transformation and scale-up of digital skills, not merely those which are technical/technological.

Meanwhile, in a 2025 policy brief on closing digital skills gaps, the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (2025), assisted by the BeWell consortium, pointed to country-based examples of legislative change on education/training in countries like France. It also outlined the overall content and structure of the various digital skills courses/programme that BeWell itself has developed in nations such as Bulgaria, Germany, Italy and Norway.

Given this diversity, therefore, it can be helpful to examine what recent webinars – with a focus on digital skills for health and care workforces – have had to offer. One example was a 24 April 2025 webinar, co-organised by EHTEL and the BeWell project (EHTEL 2025). This was one in a series of webinars organised by EHTEL in 2025 under its Imagining 2029 umbrella work programme. The webinar concentrated on change management in the digital transformation journey in health and care and had a special focus on building digitally competent workforces. Previous session topics have included skills for scale (EHTEL 2024).

### Building Digital Competency: Chief Insights

The two speakers at the EHTEL and BeWell co-organised webinar were Dominique Van De Velde and Maddalena Illario. Van De Velde reflected on an experience in Flanders (Belgium) and Illario in Campania (Italy). The first experience related to staff involved in integrated care, and the second to health and care staff working to combat anti-microbial resistance. The two speakers reflected on the initiatives’ lessons learned. These regionally-based

experiences unveiled important considerations of what can be achieved in parts of Europe. Ultimately, they could potentially be scaled up to wider regional, national or international levels. The speakers particularly reflected on how learning and training have progressed in their regions in relation to two domains of health and care, paying considerable attention to digital skills.

“Key throughout was the creation of digitally competent workforces.”

### The Case of Flanders: An Update on Alivia

Dominique Van De Velde offered an overview of the implementation of Alivia, a digital tool developed by the government in Flanders (Departement Zorg 2025; EHTEL 2023), supported by the work of his university team. Van De Velde set the scene by highlighting the importance of goal-oriented care in Flanders, when the patient is always in control. In the pilots conducted, the first action was to train patients in the use of the digital tool – making them feel safe. In terms of health care professionals, at the fore were the importance and usefulness of an online peer-to-peer led process of interaction, discussion and management, called ‘intervision’ (Staempfli et al. 2019). Van De Velde also pointed to the importance of the use of digital platforms when personnel work with vulnerable people: the example platform mentioned was InterRAI (interrai.org), a 35-country network that provides evaluators/



researchers with a variety of usable applications, instruments and tools.

Alivia's lessons learned were consolidated around a set of objectives, processes, challenges, and ultimately, outcomes that were functional, normative and integrative (figure 1). Even if the Alivia application is not yet fully introduced into clinical daily practice in Flanders, Van De Velde concluded his overview of progress on the digital tool by saying, "We hope to have Alivia implemented within a year."

### The Case of Campania: The Training Challenges for Healthcare Transformation

Regions in three different European countries – France, Italy and Spain – are addressing training challenges in relation to anti-microbial resistance through the public procurement of innovation work of the RaDAR (radar-ppi.com) project. The regions are innovating with rapid and accurate detection and the smart management of results, including with patients. Maddalena Illario drew particularly on Campania's University Federico II's experiences

with fighting this challenge, its drivers and hotspots. In an example use case, Illario emphasised that the decline in a patient's potential health status can be so rapid that introducing digital interventions on a patient journey can mean making the very difference between life and death.

"Major messages were the needs to implement digital health/training in daily practice, build up curricula year-on-year and train trainers."

Throughout her talk, Illario highlighted how introducing organisational approaches to health and care team work absolutely needs to be supported by adequate education and training. Training is one of the important pillars of the approach in Campania, where it plays a key role: indeed, a successful, focused and sharp, training exercise was completed earlier in 2025. The approach emphasised what it is called process organisation as well as teamwork. The hospital and region have been able to draw on the work of the TeamCare project (projectteamcare.eu), including its use of community-based interprofessional teams. The new interdisciplinary training syllabus designed by TeamCare highlights 10 important aspects, ranging from collective leadership & interprofessional decision-making to telemedicine and remote monitoring (figure 2).

"We hope to have Alivia implemented within one year." Dominique Van De Velde, speaker.

"Introducing organisational approaches to health and care team work absolutely needs to be supported by adequate education and training." Maddalena Illario, speaker.

"It's a whole mindset shift for our workforce." Emma Scatterty, moderator.

"It's important to focus on people, processes and technologies." Emma Scatterty, moderator.

### Highlighting Digital Transformation: Panel Additions

Moderated by Emma Scatterty of NHS Education for Scotland, a panel discussion focused on several aspects of digital transformation (Scatterty 2025). Panellists from several stakeholder backgrounds offered their inputs. The associations involved included: the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE), the Comité Permanent des Médecins Européens/Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) and European Health Management Association (EHMA).

Key throughout was the creation of digitally competent workforces. On the one side, the panellists emphasised the main problems and challenges and, on the other side, the interactions that occur between change management and reskilling and upskilling. The collective panellists' input always went wider than simply digital transformation. Training, according to Scatterty, involves "a whole mindset shift for our workforce."

#### The approach to interdisciplinary training: insights from a new syllabus



- Collective leadership & interprofessional decision-making
- Team collaboration, performance and dynamics
- Interprofessional conflict management and resolution
- Interprofessional communication, roles and professional conduct
- Shared vision and approach to healthcare
- Planning and coordination of integrated care services: care management across levels of care
- Digital skills and literacy
- Digital records, registries, data management, data security, and GDPR
- Telemedicine and remote monitoring
- Resources & tools

<https://www.projectteamcare.eu>

Figure 2: The approach to interdisciplinary training: insights from a new syllabus in Campania, Italy

care management information governance Patient interaction  
Problem solving tools Data structuration information about patients  
DMDs regulation **Data analysis** support tools  
System interoperability  
Innovation / Process AI Process Management common errors  
patients and clients digital tools clinical practice  
early diagnosis multidisciplinary hands

**Figure 3: Training needed to help webinar attendees feel most confident with their digital skills.**

The core topics emphasised involved management, collaboration, co-creation, good practices, and

“Workforce skills training is key to Europe’s future success with digital transformation, especially in the fields of health and care.”

## Obtaining Further Stakeholders' Opinions

Attendees' own recent digital skills training had mainly focused on AI. The type of training which would make attendees feel most confident about their own digital skills, however, was data analysis (figure 3).

## Next Steps

BeWell's open consultation on the kind of skills strategy that Europe will need as it moves forward with health and care will last until December 2025. During the autumn season, there will be many ongoing opportunities for people to:

**Offer their opinions:** Fill in polls and surveys through an open consultation on what is needed in upskilling and reskilling in terms of digital skills (BeWell 2025a).

**Find out more about courses:** Access information on the 180+ digital skills courses identified by BeWell since 2022 (BeWell 2025b), including some of BeWell's own.

**Test out some digital skills courses:** Trial the 20 digital skills courses/programmes developed by BeWell (BeWell 2025c).

Meanwhile, in the context of its Imagining 2029 work programme, EHTEL will continue to explore

what kinds of change management are needed alongside workforce training and development of digital skills in health and care. Future health and care workforce development and skills are likely to be embedded in a more general approach towards facing the implementation challenges of the European Health Data Space (European Commission 2025b). Clearly, workforce skills training is key to Europe's future success with digital transformation, especially in the fields of health and care.

## Conflicts of Interest

None.

## Additional Information

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