



## News release

# Lancet and Financial Times Commission transitions into a Digital Transformations for Health Lab to drive more equitable and sustainable health futures

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**10 August 2023, Geneva** – Today, the *Lancet* and *Financial Times* Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030 announced that it is transitioning into a Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab): a global consortium of partners that is pressing for stronger digital and data governance to improve young people's health and well-being and support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The DTH-Lab will take forward recommendations outlined in the Commission's report which calls on governments, technology companies and other actors to build trusted digital-first health systems that are supported by value-based governance and action to address the digital determinants of health.

The Commission's report, published in 2021 following two years of research and consultations, examined how digital transformations are directly and indirectly shaping our physical and mental health.

"Digital technologies and data offer great potential to strengthen healthcare and health systems but current models of commercialisation and data extraction risk widening inequalities and undermining health outcomes, particularly for young people and future generations. We need governance solutions that can keep up with the pace of innovation and that prioritise health and well-being over profit," says **Professor Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the DTH-Lab and former co-chair of the Lancet and Financial Times Commission.**

### Putting young people's health and well-being at the centre of digital transformations

The DTH-Lab will continue the Commission's portfolio of research and analysis whilst at the same time establishing multi stakeholder partnerships to co-design and test governance solutions, particularly in low and middle-income countries in Africa and Asia with large youth populations. It will bring youth together with policymakers, technology companies and other actors to design trusted digital-first health systems that deliver equitable benefits for the health, well-being and safety of young people and their communities.

Building on the Commission's approach, the DTH-Lab will continue to promote youth leadership and support a generation of informed and enfranchised digital health citizens. Youth will be part of the Lab's governance and play a major role in designing and testing solutions that will improve the health and well-being of future generations.

"Digitalisation is shaping all aspects of our lives, including our health – I see it every day as a resident physician. Whilst technology can empower young people to better manage their own health, it is unfortunately true that the digital world is not designed with our health and well-being in mind, as we are not consulted in the development of the majority of such tools despite



being some of the most active users of all that is digital. Through working with the Lancet/FT Commission, and now DTH-Lab, young people around the world have been able to set out their priorities for digital-first health systems and present them to those in power, clearly specifying what is currently lacking and what can be improved. I am happy that this work will continue and there will be opportunities for more young people to engage and shape the digital health futures we want in a way that reflects our needs”, says **Eglé Janušonytė, Resident Doctor in Dermatology and GHFutures2030 Regional Youth Champion.**

The establishment of the DTH-Lab is being made possible by a 3.5 year grant from Fondation Botnar.

**CEO of Fondation Botnar, Stefan Germann,** says: “We are proud to support the DTH-Lab, which will continue the Lancet and Financial Times Commission’s ambitious agenda to steer digital transformations that deliver equitable benefits for the health, well-being and safety of young people and their communities. We are thrilled that the commitment to the partnership with young people, which was initiated under the Commission, continues in the work of the DTH-Lab. It is equally encouraging to see that partners both from the Global South and North have joined the Lab and that it will create policy evidence for advocacy coalitions like Transform Health to move digital transformation for Universal Health Coverage forward.”

The DTH-Lab will be hosted at the University of Geneva’s Faculty of Medicine and based at Campus Biotech. Teams based at Ashoka University in India and PharmAccess Foundation in Nigeria will lead the DTH-Lab’s research and programmes in low and middle-income countries with large populations of young people.

**Professor Antoine Geissbuhler, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Geneva** says: “Leveraging the complementary expertise of the University of Geneva’s Digital Health Hub (gdhub), the Institute of Global Health and the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI), the DTH-Lab will contribute to accelerating the development and implementation of innovative, science-based policy- and decision-making in the domain of digital health.”

The DTH-Lab’s activities will initially focus on three areas: putting young people at the centre of digital-first health systems; advancing value-based governance of digital transformations in health; and addressing digital determinants of health. It will achieve its goals through a multidisciplinary approach that combines cutting edge research, strengthening youth leadership, driving innovations in policy and practice, and shifting public and political agendas.

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#### Notes to editors:

For young people’s health and well-being to thrive in an age of digital transformations, the Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030 recommends that policymakers and other stakeholders take action in three areas:

1. **Enfranchise young people** to co-design and critically engage with digital-first health systems as part of efforts to increase public participation and digital health citizenship.
2. Adopt a mission-oriented, precautionary, and **value-based approach to digital and data governance** in order to build public trust in digital health ecosystems, address the



unequal distribution of power and resources within and between countries, and close digital divides.

3. Recognise the digital ecosystem as an increasingly important **determinant of health** and establish governance frameworks and regulatory responses to address their direct and indirect effects.

The Governing Health Futures 2030 Commission's report is available at:  
<https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/governing-health-futures-2030>

**For more information** about the DTH-Lab or to arrange interviews please contact Aferdita Bytyqi, Executive Director at [aferdita.bytyqi@unige.ch](mailto:aferdita.bytyqi@unige.ch)