



## **2025 HFN HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

In partnership with WHX Lagos,

### **COMMUNIQUE**

**Theme:** Accelerating Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Health Sovereignty: Scaling Up Best Practices through Public-Private Integration

2 June, 2025 | Landmark Centre, Lagos, Nigeria



The 2025 Healthcare Leadership Conference of the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN) brought together stakeholders from across the healthcare sector for a landmark event focused on shaping the future of healthcare in Nigeria. Organized in collaboration with the World Health Xpo (formerly Medic West Africa), the conference continues to serve as a platform for catalyzing healthcare reforms and advancing collaborative action to improve healthcare delivery across Nigeria. This year's gathering was insightful and attracted a wide range of stakeholders, including government leaders, policy makers, private healthcare providers, development partners, health economists, innovators, and professionals from across the country and diaspora.

The discussions spanned critical themes such as Advancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) at the Primary Healthcare (PHC) Level, Driving Digital Transformations and Innovation in Healthcare, Adopting Group Practice, supporting policy frameworks that foster private sector engagement and building capacity and enhancing the Healthcare workforce. The conference served as both a forward-looking dialogue and a call for private sector's involvement in the healthcare transformation in Nigeria.



## **PRESENTATION 1:**

### **Scaling Up Universal Health Coverage Through Digital & Mobile Technology: Practical Roadmap & Innovations**

**Kaakpema Yelapaala**, Senior Fellow & Lecturer, Faculty Director, InnovateHealth Yale, Yale School of Public Health

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In his presentation, Kaakpema outlined a roadmap for Universal Health Coverage in Sub-Saharan Africa via digital and mobile technology. His presentation emphasized that robust digital infrastructure—improved power, connectivity, and cloud services—is vital for health sector transformation. Sub-Saharan Africa leads in mobile money, with 280 million active accounts and significant global transactions, yet faces challenges like unstable energy and data pipelines. He also highlights potential annual savings of \$250–\$500M from digitizing health interventions and highlights local GPU supercomputer initiatives to support AI diagnostics and precision medicine.

#### **Key Outcomes and Recommendations**

- **Enhance Investment in Digital Public Infrastructure:**  
Governments and stakeholders should substantially invest in foundational digital infrastructure—power, connectivity, cloud hosting, and data governance—to facilitate robust digital health transformation.
- **Conduct Comprehensive Digital Health Readiness Assessments:**  
Initiate tailored assessments to identify gaps in existing digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and capabilities, ensuring that interventions are grounded in local realities and emerging AI technologies.
- **Enhance Localization of AI Models:**  
Focus on developing and fine-tuning AI and LLMs to support major African languages to close the performance gap and boost local relevance, ensuring the technology is equitable and culturally responsive.
- **Foster Strategic Public–Private Partnerships:**  
Encourage collaboration among government bodies, telecom operators, tech firms, and health innovators to co-create integrated and scalable digital health solutions, leveraging shared investments for mutual benefit.



➤ **Establish Clear Regulatory Frameworks:**

Develop and enforce policies around data privacy, cross-border data flow, and AI ethics to build trust among investors, innovators, and the public and to accelerate the safe deployment of digital health tools.

➤ **Create Pilot-to-Scale Innovation Sandboxes:**

Establish controlled environments (sandboxes) that allow for rapid prototyping, testing, and scaling of digital health solutions with ethical guardrails, ensuring sustained innovation with measurable outcomes.

➤ **Strengthen Inter-Ministerial Coordination:**

Promote alignment between health, ICT, finance, and security ministries to ensure coherent policy development, shared cost-benefit analysis, and smooth implementation of digital transformation initiatives across all levels.

These insights reflect a vital call to action for health and policy leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa. By addressing not only the infrastructural challenges but also by harnessing the transformative potential of technology and AI, the region can make significant strides toward achieving Universal Health Coverage. The roadmap provided offers both a diagnostic overview of current gaps and a strategic blueprint for the future of digital health in Africa.



## PRESENTATION 2:

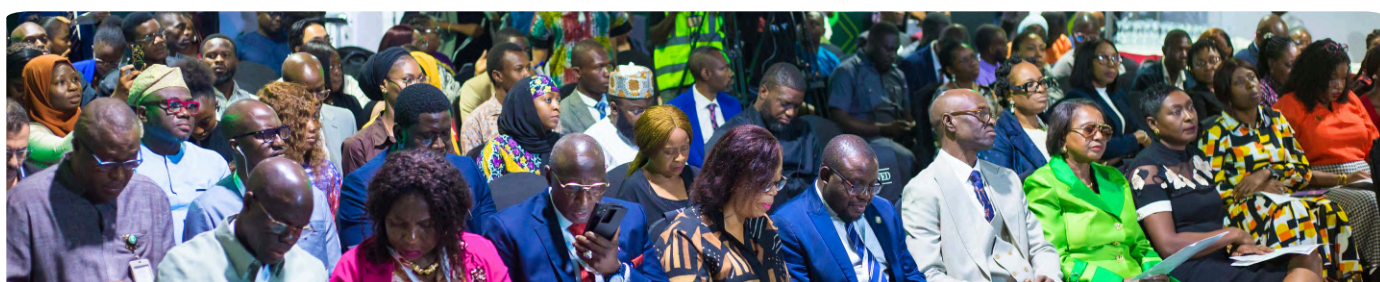
### Lessons from Other Countries: Successful models of public-private collaboration in achieving UHC

**Dr. Olumide Okunola**, Senior Health Specialist, World Bank Group

Dr. Olumide Okunola's presentation explored successful public-private collaboration models from various countries in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). He emphasized the importance of service contracts over complex infrastructure deals, using examples from Peru's cervical cancer screening and Kenya's large-scale equipment procurement. He highlighted how structured government policies and financial incentives drive private sector involvement, ensuring sustainable healthcare expansion. Dr. Okunola underscored the necessity of government-backed financing for healthcare accessibility and economic development while advocating for strategic partnerships that optimize resources and reduce costs.

#### Key Outcomes and Recommendations

- **Expand Service-Based PPP Models:**  
Focus on scalable service contracts rather than complex infrastructure projects to achieve faster implementation.
- **Improve Policy Frameworks:**  
Governments must update healthcare policies to attract private sector investments through tax relief and subsidies.
- **Leverage Digital Health Solutions:**  
Countries should invest in mobile-based healthcare solutions for cost-effective expansion.
- **Strengthen Financial Commitments:**  
Prioritizing healthcare financing ensures long-term sustainability and equitable access to quality services.



## PRESENTATION 3:

### Quality as the Cornerstone of UHC: Strengthening The Healthcare Value Chain for Better Outcomes

**Dr. Adedamola Dada**, Medical Director FMC Ebute- Metta

Dr. Dada emphasized that achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) without quality is ineffective and unsustainable. Using global examples from Rwanda, Thailand, and India, he highlighted how investment in quality—through infrastructure, workforce, and governance—directly improves health outcomes.

He introduced the WHO's seven dimensions of quality care and argued that quality strengthens patient trust, service utilization, and system efficiency.

He identified Nigeria's major challenges, including poor infrastructure, high out-of-pocket costs, and workforce shortages. His proposed solution was a comprehensive framework integrating governance reforms, provider training, improved infrastructure, and robust monitoring. He concluded by calling for multi-stakeholder collaboration and policy reform to embed quality as non-negotiable in Nigeria's UHC journey

#### Key Outcomes and Recommendations

- ▶ **Enhance Governance and Financing:**  
Increase health funding, improve transparency, and implement quality-linked performance payments to promote accountability.
- ▶ **Invest in Workforce Development:**  
Invest in continuous professional development, enforce competency-based licensing, and adopt strong retention strategies to mitigate brain drain.
- ▶ **Invest in Infrastructure and Supply Chain Upgrades:**  
Standardize procurement processes, ensure regular facility accreditation and maintenance, and invest in infrastructural improvements.
- ▶ **Introduce Integrated Service Delivery:**  
Strengthen primary healthcare as the entry point for patient care, and use clinical guidelines and decision support tools to improve care coordination.



- **Adoption of Robust Monitoring and Evaluation:**  
Quality systems like SafeCare and digital health information systems should be used to track patient outcomes and feedback in real time.
- **Leverage Strategic Public-Private Partnerships:**  
To sustain quality improvements resources, the public sector should leverage the expertise from the private sector and development partners.
- **Establish Policy and Regulatory Reforms:**  
To achieve high-quality and equitable healthcare, Government should establish clear national quality frameworks and quality standards, linking regulatory oversight with UHC goals.

These insights offer a strategic blueprint for integrating quality into every aspect of healthcare delivery, ensuring that UHC initiatives in Nigeria and beyond are both impactful and sustainable.



## PRESENTATION 4:

### Strengthening Nigeria's Health System: The Role of Group Practice in Enhancing Efficiency & Access

**Dr. Nkata Chuku**, Founding Partner, Health Systems Consult (HSCL)

Dr. Nkata Chuku identified the dominance of solo medical practices as inefficient and fragmented, proposing group practices as a scalable solution. By sharing resources and coordinating care, group practices can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance health outcomes. Drawing from successful global models like Aga Khan and Evercare, he advocated for robust governance, digital integration, and community-based care. He urged policy reforms, financial incentives, and pilot programs to localize and scale the group practice model for a more sustainable healthcare system in Nigeria.

#### Key Outcomes and Recommendations

- **Adoption of Group Practice Models:**  
Encourage the formation of integrated group practices to streamline service delivery.
- **Implementation of Policy Incentives:**  
Advocacy for the implementation of government incentives, regulatory reforms, and clear policy frameworks to support group practices.
- **Innovative Financial Models:**  
Facilitate access to capital through public-private partnerships and tailored financing solutions.
- **Digital Transformation:**  
Invest in electronic health records and digital health platforms to enhance operational efficiency.
- **Continuous Professional Development:**  
Promote robust training, standardization, and peer-review mechanisms for health professionals.
- **Pilot Programs:**  
Launch evidence-based pilot projects to validate and refine group practice models in different regions.



### ► **Strengthen Referral Systems:**

Improve coordination among primary, secondary, and tertiary facilities to boost patient outcomes and access.

These insights underline a transformative pathway for Nigeria's health system, emphasizing that group practice can unlock greater efficiency, lower costs, and improve healthcare equity across the nation.

## **PRESENTATION 5: Leveraging the NHIA Act for UHC Acceleration: Opportunities for Public-Private Integration**

**Senator Dr. Ibrahim Oloriegbe**, Chairman, National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)

Senator Dr. Ibrahim Oloriegbe presented the NHIA Act as a foundational step toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by mandating health insurance for all residents, including short-term visitors. He highlighted NHIA's goal of consolidating fragmented insurance schemes into an integrated system and emphasized the importance of the Vulnerable Group Fund to support low-income populations.

He highlighted key opportunities that included using technology for innovative financing and enforcing mandatory insurance for organizations. However, he noted implementation challenges such as fund misallocation and institutional resistance. He called for urgent amendments, better fund management, and stronger public-private collaboration to realize NHIA's full potential.



## Key Outcomes and Recommendations

- **Amend Fund Allocation:**  
Enact amendments to ensure the Vulnerable Group Fund is managed within NHIA, not diverted to other ministries.
- **Strengthen Regulatory Oversight:**  
Enhance NHIA's authority to license and integrate all public and private insurance schemes.
- **Introduction of innovative Financing Models:**  
Explore innovative revenue-generating ideas (e.g., small levies on mobile calls) to supplement funding.
- **Mandating Employer-Based Insurance:**  
Enforce mandatory insurance for organizations with more than five employees to broaden coverage.
- **Enhanced Public-Private Collaboration:**  
Develop clear frameworks to integrate HMOs, TPAs, and healthcare providers effectively.
- **Digital Health Integration:**  
Utilize digital technologies to streamline evidence-based decision-making and improve service delivery.
- **Strengthening Inter-Agency Stakeholder Co-ordination:**  
Foster continuous dialogue among policymakers, finance authorities, and industry players to resolve implementation challenges and build sustainable UHC initiatives.

These insights encapsulate the vision and challenges of the NHIA Act, highlighting both the transformative potential and the necessary steps toward a more integrated, efficient, and equitable healthcare system in Nigeria.



## PANEL DISCUSSION:

### Bridging the Public-Private Divide: Strengthening Collaboration for Health Sovereignty

**Moderator: Dr. Ayodele Benson-Cole**, First Vice-President Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN), CEO, Benson Coleman and Associates

#### Panelists:

- **Pharm. Kenneth Onuegbu**, National Chairman, Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP)
- **Chika Offor**, CEO of Vaccine Network for Disease Control (VNDC)
- **Dr. Shamsudden Aliyu** CEO, Foresight Healthcare, Vice Chairman Sahad Hospitals
- **Prof Cheluchi Onyemelukwe**, Managing Partner, Health Ethics and Law Consulting

The panel highlighted the essential role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in transforming Nigeria's healthcare system. Panelists advocated for stronger policies to boost local pharmaceutical manufacturing, reduce import dependence, and establish cost-saving industrial clusters.

They emphasized community-led models like "Adopt a PHC," trust-building in primary care, and the integration of digital health in rural areas. Legal reforms were proposed to ensure PPP stability beyond political cycles. Overall, the discussion reinforced that achieving UHC requires sustained public funding, robust PPP frameworks, and clearly defined stakeholder roles to drive health sovereignty and system resilience.





## Key Outcomes and Recommendations

### ➤ **Establishing a Pharmaceutical Hub:**

Developing a unified system where multiple pharmaceutical companies operate within a shared infrastructure—common roads, water, and electricity—to significantly reduce production costs, ensuring affordable medications for consumers.

### ➤ **Strengthening PPP Governance:**

Revising the legal framework of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) within the Health Policy Act to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and continuous improvement in healthcare delivery.

### ➤ **Advancing Local Drug Manufacturing:**

Prioritizing homegrown pharmaceutical production by fostering collective investment in manufacturing plants, recognizing that drug security requires proactive commitment rather than external dependence.

### ➤ **Funding for Primary Health Care:**

The government must take the lead in financing UHC, ensuring predictable and adequate funding for essential healthcare services, including immunization and vaccine availability for vulnerable populations.

### **Community Involvement & PPP Support:**

- Initiatives such as the Adopt a PHC program encourage local community ownership of healthcare facilities, promoting accountability and sustainability. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be strengthened to enhance healthcare infrastructure and services.

### **Policy Reform to Drive Private Investment:**

- Updating outdated healthcare policies to encourage private sector involvement by offering incentives, subsidies, and a structured Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework that makes healthcare investments more attractive.

### **Sustainable Healthcare Investment Models:**

- Ensuring that PPP arrangements are structured for long-term sustainability, where government subsidies make essential healthcare services affordable while private sector participation guarantees efficiency, accessibility, and continuous provision of consumables.



➤ **Clear Incentives for Private Sector Engagement:**

Policies should specify incentives such as tax relief, provision of infrastructure like land and power, and support for digital health solutions to attract private sector investment in healthcare.

➤ **Well-Defined Governance Structures for PPPs:**

Ensuring the right stakeholders—local, state, and federal governments—are properly involved in agreements to maintain sustainability and prevent disruptions due to administrative changes.

The 2025 HFN Healthcare Leadership Conference reaffirmed that achieving Universal Health Coverage and national health sovereignty is possible through deliberate public-private collaboration. It concluded with a unified call to action: to deepen policy reform, scale local solutions, and institutionalize innovation and partnership as pillars of sustainable healthcare transformation.

