

## BRIEF REPORT

# ICT Initiatives Taken by UHS Lahore During COVID-19 Pandemic

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In the wake of Coronavirus pandemic, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan are preparing hard to impart distance education; the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) companies are also struggling for their existence.

Technology has never been used at such a substantial rate for educating public at large. ICTs have definitely strained the education, healthcare and the governance systems. Although Coronavirus pandemic created panic among the world but still there are companies providing ICT solutions to cater the after effects of this pandemic.

University of Health Sciences, Lahore, as a public sector health university with more than eighty (80) affiliated institutions, felt the need to provide and to be at par with the technological advancements in ICT and to fulfill its corporate social responsibility, have started the following initiatives by effectively utilizing the ICTs model.

### TELEMEDICINE CENTRE

IT Department has been part of providing assistance and services for the development and working of Telemedicine Centre established to facilitate Coronavirus patients and general public. With specialized telephone lines and website, doctors at UHS Telemedicine Centre are guiding and facilitating the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This initiative was taken to spread

awareness about Coronavirus, guiding patients about treatment and how to deal with it.

### ONLINE EDUCATION/TEACHING

To avoid delay in education session of the students, UHS, in collaboration and with the due courtesy of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, is using specialized software (Microsoft Teams) for conducting Online Classes and Lectures. HEC has provided multiple licensed accounts of the said software to UHS. UHS IT Department is facilitating its affiliated public and private sector institutes to conduct online classes, lecture and meetings by providing licensed accounts of MS Teams. Moreover, IT Department is also providing assistance to its affiliated institutes in setting up the software (Microsoft Teams) and its usage. Departments at UHS have already started conducting online classes/lectures with a huge success.

### REMOTE WORKING FROM HOME

Social Distancing is the main aspect of slowing down the spread of this pandemic. Since most of the IT software development and monitoring can easily be done through home and does not require the presence of all employees at the IT department; only limited number of employees are attending office (IT Department) and following the SOPs as set by the competent authority. Employees attending office are providing assistance in the conduct of on premises online meetings/webinars and also looking after other technical matters. Working from home is also being encouraged for

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employees whose presence is not vital for the daily activities of the department.

regular basis and more sites are also being included to further expand the trial.

### **COVID-19 PROTECT TRIAL PORTAL**

UHS IT Department has also developed PROTECT Trial Portal which is a system designed and developed specifically for the collection of data of patients suffering from COVID-19. The system works by assigning predefined drug regimen to each new case/patient added in the system. The data collected by the system is then analyzed for the outcomes of the drug and its effects on the patient. The idea behind this is to assess which drug is proving better for the treatment of COVID-19 patients by analyzing its outcomes. The system collects the data from 17 different collaborating sites. The system is enhancing with time on the basis of data collection. The data is analyzed on

### **WEBINARS**

With the help of IT Department, UHS is also conducting frequent webinars with its partners in order to raise awareness about the pandemic. Webinars are being conducted for doctors, students and other health professionals about latest research being made and newest methodologies being adopted for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Doctors, students and other health professionals are encouraged to attend these webinars and the access links to these webinars are provided by the IT Department.

IT Department is performing its obligation as national service to facilitate the conduct of webinars and all other activities pertaining to fight COVID-19 along with other departments.

*Mr. Faisal Amin has eighteen years of experience in the field of Information Technology. After completing formal education in computer sciences, he did postgraduation in Business Administration with specialization in IT. He is currently working as Director Information Technology at UHS LAHORE. He played pivotal role in the development of IT department at UHS. Being the Head of IT department, he took a number of initiatives for the automation & computerization of the university.*