



MEDIA RELEASE

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Broad community of interests working towards a secure electronic vaccination card

A broad-based consortium is bringing momentum into the digitalisation of the Swiss healthcare system: Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, the Swiss Medical Association (FMH), pharmaSuisse, HCI Solutions from Galenica, Interpharma and the MIDATA cooperative have teamed up to present a concept proposal on how Switzerland can introduce a secure electronic vaccination card – in which citizens have ownership of their data at all times.

The aim is for the Swiss to collect, manage and use their vaccination data electronically again. To help achieve this, a feasibility study has been published by a broad consortium comprising Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, the Association of Swiss Doctors FMH, pharmaSuisse, HCI Solutions, Interpharma and the MIDATA cooperative. The study found that a secure electronic vaccination card is not only possible, but also offers considerable added value: “A card of this kind gives citizens ownership of their vaccination data. They alone decide who they make it available to,” Professor Serge Bignens from BFH explains. “At the same time, they can be better informed and sensitised about the benefits of vaccination.” This would allow people to better manage their own immunisation protection, which in turn would boost public health. In addition, electronic vaccination records make it easier for doctors and pharmacists to ascertain patients’ current vaccination status, which also permits the retrieval of electronic vaccination recommendations. Finally, researchers can make use of anonymised vaccination data to shed light on new insights and correlations. This can be done using the data platform of the non-profit cooperative MIDATA. Switzerland is lagging behind in the use of health data, as shown by pertinent international studies such as the Bertelsmann Foundation’s digital health index, in which Switzerland ranks fourth to last. The experiences of the last few years have made clear all over again how important a functioning health data ecosystem is for society. Ultimately, it is also data from this ecosystem that helps to further improve the vaccines.

Paramount principles: robust data protection and patient data sovereignty

The feasibility study was drafted in line with certain key principles. Besides citizens’ data ownership, data protection is also essential and is given utmost priority in the drafted proposal. Furthermore, the concept proposal is public, and the standards of the proposed solution are widely applicable, meaning that the model can be expanded at will. The authors have also ensured that the proposed solution is compatible with other initiatives – in particular with the electronic patient records (EPR) system. This would allow citizens to freely move their data from one place to another. Another key point is that the electronic vaccination card could be realised quickly – as soon as a sustainable financing arrangement is in place.

Long-term financing and construction of the system as the next steps

An immunisation data ecosystem requires funding. The study lists in detail which components would have to be integrated, newly developed, maintained and operated. The next step towards implementation is to secure long-term funding, after which the system can be built and maintained. This necessitates private and public investment, as the e-vaccination card is to be available to patients free of charge.

The published study shows that a secure and broadly supported electronic vaccination card is possible for Switzerland, explicitly also that it is technically feasible to link it to electronic patient records. The study is very timely, because it is also interesting for the federal administration, who are currently working on the introduction of a vaccination card in the EPR system.

[Read the study here](#)

**Contact**

Prof. Serge Bignens, Head of the Institute for Medical Informatics I4MI, Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, serge.bignens@bfh.ch, Tel. +41 32 321 67 01

Anna-Sophie Herbst, communications specialist, Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH, anna-sophie.herbst@bfh.ch, Tel. +41 31 848 50 12