



An integrated digital health platform for health worker communication and coordination

WHAT IS mHERO?

mHero is a free system that connects health workers to health officials, to each other, and to critical information that can save lives, using the basic mobile phones that most health workers already have. The platform facilitates two-way communication using SMS messages and interactive voice response—and gets critical information to frontline health workers in real time.

Initially launched to address the Ebola crisis in 2014 by a consortium led by IntraHealth International and UNICEF, mHero offers ministries of health and health workers a trusted channel of information on a broad range of health services, including primary care, maternal and child health, family planning, HIV, malaria, and nutrition.

ADVANTAGES

- Easy to learn and use
- Relies on basic cell phones (most health workers own at least one)
- Targets messages by health worker cadre, location, or other filters
- Enhances health worker engagement and trust
- Accelerates identification of health system barriers and challenges
- Extends and improves national health information systems



CAPABILITIES

mHero can...	Resulting in...
Validate and consolidate health worker and services data at the national level	More accurate and timely workforce and systems data for decision-making
Conduct rapid "flash" surveys of health workers	Quick data collection from health workers for targeted response
Produce real-time inventory reports	Decreased stockouts and increased safety for health workers
Send structured messages for refresher training and courses	Improved health worker competencies while performing necessary tasks
Target messages to absent workers	More health workers returning to work
Instantly deliver lab test results	Decreased wait time for results

mHERO TECHNOLOGY

mHero unites three existing open source systems that communicate in a coordinated fashion using open standards and leveraging open health information exchange (OpenHIE) principles.

- **RapidPro** (UNICEF): Easily creates SMS-based workflows to monitor programs, track activities, or engage with beneficiaries.
- **iHRIS** (IntraHealth): Supplies decision-makers with high-quality data on health worker contact information, deployment, position, cadre, skills, qualifications, and more.
- **DHIS 2** (HISP): Helps governments and organizations manage operations, monitor processes, and improve communication.

mHero can immediately use health workforce data to target specific communications to health workers whose mobile numbers are captured in iHRIS.

mHERO IMPLEMENTATION

mHero requires committed, capable country leadership, oversight, and governance. Host governments decide how to best use mHero, while donors and nongovernmental organizations such as UNICEF and IntraHealth help build country capacity to use and implement the platform.

National health officials led the first successful pilot of mHero in the midst of Liberia's Ebola crisis in late 2014. Officials are now scaling up mHero in Liberia, and Guinea is making plans to follow suit. The pilot achieved a high response rate from health workers, indicating trust in the system as well as ease of response. Over 70% of health workers who received mHero messages continued communicating with the system.

Two-way communication between health workers and health officials can help bring epidemics such as Ebola under control, protect health workers and their communities, and curb future outbreaks, all while strengthening ongoing communication among the different levels of the health system.

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