



## About Health Innovation Hub Ireland

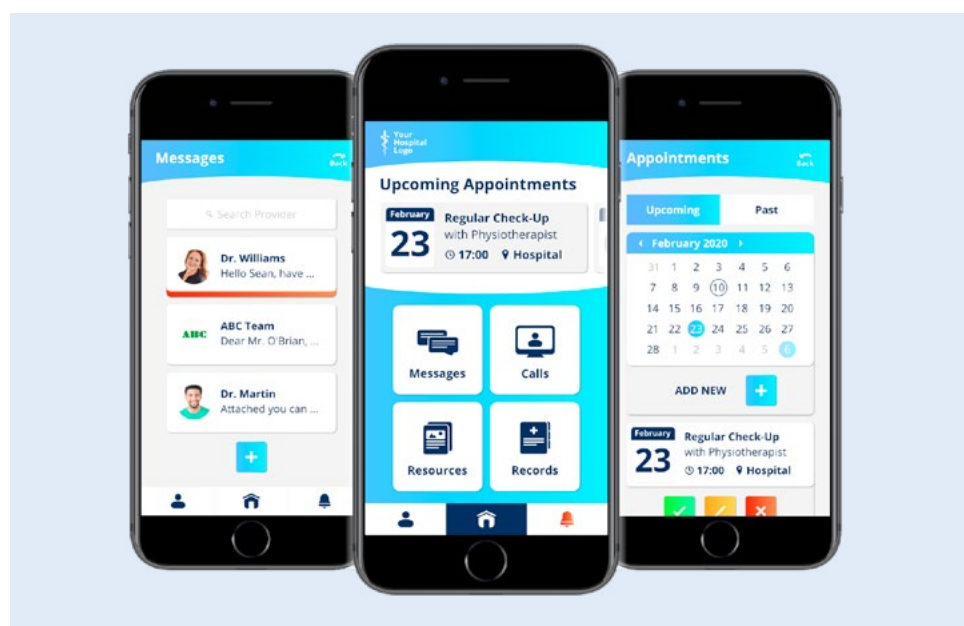
Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) was established by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health, supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to drive collaboration between the health service and enterprise. We offer companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical validation studies and the health service access to innovative products, services and devices that they may not otherwise be exposed to. HIHI is built on the recognition that collaboration with enterprise can benefit patient care, patient pathways and outcomes. We assess all concepts

for healthcare innovation from those on the frontline – from clinician to porter. We encourage healthcare professionals to get in touch with HIHI if they have an idea or solution to how something in your job might work better.



Wellola's end-to-end patient communication platform was designed to 'plug-in' to hospital, organisation and primary care systems, giving patients access to their medical information (both clinical and administrative).

This results in huge cost savings for buyers (such as the NHS) in postal costs, no-shows and administration whilst supporting community-based care delivery via Wellola's video and online consultation tools.



## The Healthcare Challenge

Large treatment gaps prevail nationally for common mental health conditions. Traditional service models need to evolve in appropriate ways in line with major societal trends - internet, smart-phones and other technologies. Tele mental health is already in extensive use in a number of countries, enabling remote client-practitioner therapy sessions. As winners of HIHI national call 2019, Wellola requested the support

of HIHI to explore pilot opportunities for remote care in the mental health market. Following an approach from HIHI to the Irish Association of counselling and psychotherapy (IACP), all three parties agreed a pilot that launched in May 2020. The HIHI study was designed to evaluate remote psychotherapy and counselling care supported by Wellola and to assess its product offer in this setting.

# The Healthcare Solution

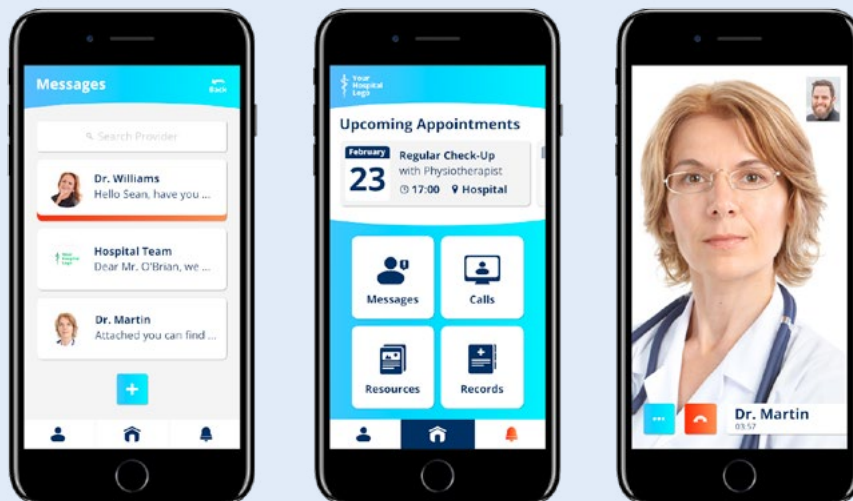
Through Wellola, clients can reach their counsellor or psychotherapist at any time, from any place via one of the platform's core modules - secure video. While there are some video consultation solutions that can be used to offer treatment online - Skype, Zoom, FaceTime etc - many are not designed specifically with healthcare in mind. Wellola offers counsellors and psychotherapists

the means to communicate with clients via video consultations in a closed GDPR-compliant manner. The Wellola system was deployed for the HIHI pilot offering IACP members use of:

- Therapy delivered through secure patient portal.
- Online booking and payment.

## HIHI Role

HIHI proposed a study to evaluate the impact of community-based care, supported by digital tools. Working with Wellola and IACP, HIHI designed the pilot study to offer IACP members the opportunity to use the Wellola online booking, payment and video consultation systems. HIHI participant research across three strands, assessed the efficacy of the at home consultation, conditions and clients suited to this method, use of technology to facilitate therapy and the impact of online payment and booking for IACP members. There was no engagement with participant clients.



## Outcome Report

This study functioned primarily to inform Wellola on the Irish remote care market in mental health. Prior to this, there was no research into this area in Ireland specifically, though the market has grown rapidly in the UK and the US. The pilot tested the Wellola product with IACP members to gain specific product feedback to aid development. The study also informed both IACP and Wellola on habits and uses for Irish counsellors and psychotherapists in terms of an online care offer and the clients with whom they engage with on this platform.

Collaborating with HIHI and IACP on the pilot proved invaluable for Wellola; engaging with and learning from those that utilised the platform. Gathering vital feedback and implementing updates to the interface and functionality were the source for crucial enhancements to the solution. Key learnings and resulting product development for this market fell into three main categories -

1. Improved User Interface In The Wellola Video Module
2. Enhanced Functionality In The Wellola Video Module
3. Training Needs Analysis.

### Testimonial

*"Working with HIHI opened up opportunities for us that would previously have proved challenging to access in our own right. Given that the project was not commercial in nature and supported by HIHI, this offered us a greater chance of collaborating with IACP. With HIHI acting as a broker, overseeing and driving the project, this provided us with a robust management process through which we were able to engage seamlessly with IACP. Having a neutral party, such as HIHI support us in collating and analysing the feedback and data supplied by participants of the study, ensured we gained valuable insights to enhance our solution."*

*Working on this pilot raised the profile of Wellola in the UK, and we subsequently were awarded a contract with the British equivalent of the IACP, the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists to offer their members our platform."*

Sonia Neary  
Founder/CEO of Wellola



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