

Immediate Policy Actions for the Honourable Commissioner of Health and Chairman of the Committee on Health, Ekiti State House of Assembly

- Create a Digital Health Desk in the State Ministry of Health
- Endorse and fund the development of a state digital health policy within the next budget planning cycle.
- Expand Ulerawa State Health Insurance Scheme to all healthcare facilities in the state (public and private).
- Honorable Commissioner for Health to commit to sustaining and scaling up the Digital Mom's models and strategies in all public health facilities in Ekiti State.
- Allocate funding to scale up digital maternal health innovations across all LGAs in Ekiti State.
- The Hon. Commissioner should use his office as the Chair of Nigeria's Health Commissioners Forum to facilitate discussions at the Forum on integrating digital maternal health indicators into National DHIS2 reporting.

About MHAC and the Digital MOM Project

The Maternal Health Advocacy and Communications (MHAC) project, implemented by ACIOE Foundation and Nigeria Health Watch, supports state governments in strengthening maternal health outcomes through policy advocacy and private-sector engagement to create an enabling environment for digital health solutions and sustainable health financing for the private sector. Operating across Ekiti, Lagos, and Kaduna States, MHAC promotes evidence-based innovations of MSD for Mothers collaborators to support evidence-based decision-making and sustainable financing for maternal health services.

The Digital Mom project is implemented by mDOC, and it delivers technology-enabled maternal health support through digital self-care coaching, remote monitoring, and coordinated care pathways. Its implementation in Ekiti State demonstrates how digital health solutions can improve service uptake, strengthen continuity of care, and enhance accountability within the maternal health system.

References

1. Baldrige, A. S., et al. (2023). Formative evaluation and adaptation of a hypertension Extension for Community Health Outcomes program for healthcare workers within the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. *Global Heart*, 18(1), Article 64. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gh.1277>
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3. Ogedegbe, G., et al. (2023). Formative evaluation and adaptation of a hypertension Extension for Community Health Outcomes program for healthcare workers within the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. *Global Heart*, 18(1), Article 1277. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gh.1277>



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Accelerating Maternal Health Outcomes through an Enabling Environment for Digital Health Solutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Executive Summary

Maternal health outcomes remain a priority development challenge in Nigeria. In Ekiti State, despite improvements in service delivery and the expansion of health insurance, gaps in continuity of care, workforce availability, real-time data use, and access to maternal health information persist. Evidence from the Maternal Health Advocacy and Communications (MHAC) rapid assessment on *The Private Sector's Role in Delivering Digital Health Solutions and Private Healthcare Financing in MSD for Mothers (MfM) Supported States* and the implementation of the mDoc-Digital Mom project in Ekiti State demonstrates that digital health solutions can significantly improve antenatal engagement, maternal health education, follow-up care, and referral coordination. However, digital health adoption remains fragmented due to policy gaps, limited financing, weak interoperability, and insufficient digital infrastructure. Establishing a clear enabling policy environment will enable Ekiti State to scale proven digital maternal health innovations, improve maternal health outcomes, strengthen accountability, and accelerate progress toward achieving Universal Health Coverage.

Ekiti State and Digital Health Strategies

Ekiti State has demonstrated commitment to improving maternal health through health insurance initiatives (Ulerawa Health Insurance Scheme), primary healthcare reforms, and community-based programming. The State is making progress with counterpart funding from implementing partners like Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), which supports the uptake of services under the Ulerawa Health Insurance Scheme, capacity strengthening for private health care providers by organizations like Rotary International and mDoc, and other initiatives¹. Nonetheless, Persistent challenges include workforce shortages, uneven service quality, fragmented maternal health data systems, and access barriers for women in rural communities.

Challenges to Digital Health Implementation in Ekiti State

- Workforce shortages
- Uneven service quality
- Fragmented maternal health data systems
- Access barriers for women in rural communities

Findings from the MHAC assessment highlight growing interest among healthcare providers and policymakers in adopting digital health tools, but also identify gaps in policy frameworks, digital infrastructure, financing mechanisms, and workforce readiness that limit scalability. A structured enabling environment is therefore necessary to institutionalize digital health solutions within the Ekiti State maternal healthcare system.

¹Simeon C.C, Ibukun A. et al. (2025). *The private sector's role in delivering digital health solutions and private healthcare financing in MSD for Mothers (MfM) supported states* [Unpublished Manuscript] ACIOE Foundation

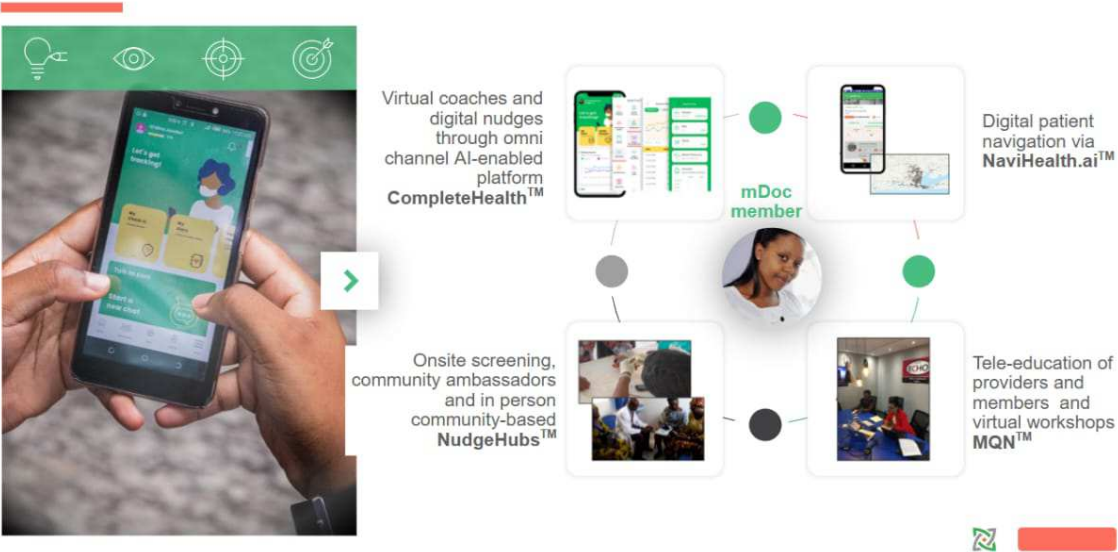
Why Digital Health Matters for Maternal Health Outcomes—Key Learnings

- Nigeria’s maternal mortality ratio remains high at 512 deaths per 100,000 live births, highlighting the need for innovative approaches.
- Telemedicine expands access to skilled maternal health care in underserved LGAs and mitigates workforce shortages.
- Technology-enabled maternal health coaching and follow-ups improve continuity of care and reduce delays in accessing services.
- Mobile platforms improve maternal health literacy and promote timely healthcare-seeking behavior.
- Digital health tools improve adherence to antenatal care and remote monitoring.
- Digital tracking strengthens referral systems and early identification of pregnancy-related risks.
- Real-time data improves service delivery monitoring and policy responsiveness.
- Integration across Ekiti State healthcare service providers (public and private health facilities, community pharmacists, and patent proprietary medicine vendors) can improve service coordination and reach.

Digital Mom Project Implementation Approach in Ekiti State

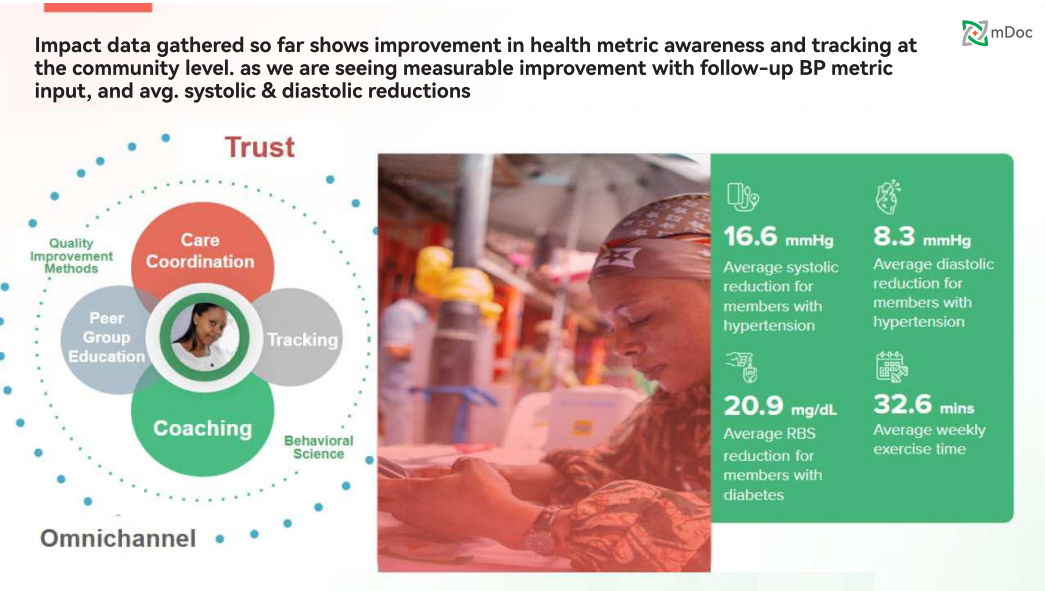
The approach is intentionally designed for scalability and sustainability, and the mDoc Digital Mom project introduced a technology-enabled maternal health model that strengthens outcomes through digital and AI-powered self-care support, community engagement, and close collaboration with the health system, aligned with Ekiti State health priorities.

Digital MOM solution is leveraging mDoc's four-component, high tech, high touch approach to integrated self-care



Currently, the project supports over 23,910 women of reproductive age across Ekiti State, strengthening their digital, health, and financial literacy to drive sustainable behaviour change. By equipping women with practical self-care tools and knowledge, the program promotes informed decision-making, chronic condition management, resilience, and self-efficacy, while creating positive ripple effects within families and communities. Women are also supported with improved access to care, structured referral pathways, and opportunities to share feedback that informs quality-of-care improvements.

The impact has been significant. Participants have recorded an average reduction of 22.98 mmHg in systolic blood pressure, 16.92 mmHg in diastolic blood pressure, and 22.11 mg/dL in blood glucose levels, alongside an average weight loss of 13.84 kg. Among members identified with elevated health metrics at onboarding (41%), 46.85% were referred to a health facility for further care, with a 62% referral completion rate observed.



Increased empowerment has translated into more active care feedback, with 2,668 reviews collected to date and negative sentiment reduced to just 9.2%.

Capacity building has been a core pillar of implementation. A total of 543+ healthcare workers have been trained, including through an AI literacy series. Knowledge gains ranged from 7–20% among women of reproductive age and 9–20% among healthcare workers. These results compare favorably with international benchmarks, including reported knowledge gains of 10.4% in India (Baldrige, et al., 2023), 15–35% in the USA (Ogedegbe, et al., 2023), and 9.7% in Namibia (Bikinesi, et al., 2020).

Key Lessons from Ekiti State Digital Mom Project (DMP) Implementation

Digital health solutions have shown potential to improve maternal health outcomes when embedded within existing health systems and supported by strong governance structures. Stakeholders highlighted that digital platforms improved follow-up, maternal education, and communication with clients, but scaling remains limited by digital literacy gaps, inconsistent connectivity, and the absence of a coordinated state digital health policy. Assessment findings also reveal health system constraints affecting maternal outcomes, including shortages of skilled personnel, variable service quality based on available infrastructure, and limited awareness of maternal health entitlements among women. Integrating digital innovations with financing reforms, workforce capacity-building, and strengthened public-private collaboration are essential for sustainable impact.

Policy Priorities for Ekiti State Government

1. **Strengthen Governance & Policy**
 - Develop a state-specific digital health policy framework.
 - Establish a Digital Health Technical Working Group under SMOH/SPHCDA.
 - Integrate digital maternal health into state health strategies and plans.
2. **Sustainable Financing**
 - Create dedicated budget lines/items for digital maternal health platforms.
 - Sustain digital services in the state health insurance reimbursement models.
 - Promote public-private partnerships to scale digital health innovation.
3. **Health System Strengthening**
 - Scale proven digital maternal healthcare models across PHCs and secondary facilities.
 - Strengthen interoperability between public and private health information systems.
 - Improve digital infrastructure and connectivity in underserved communities.
4. **Workforce & Community Readiness**
 - Promote digital literacy among frontline health workers and community volunteers.
 - Expand training of healthcare providers on digital health tools and telemedicine protocols.
 - Promote community awareness and digital maternal health education campaigns.