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MAKING TECHNOLOGY WORK FOR A HEALTHY BELFAST

The role of new technology in helping to deliver a modern health service and address health inequalities was at the centre of a major seminar in Belfast today.

The seminar was hosted by the WHO body, Belfast Healthy Cities and was part of a series focused on sharing learning from Belfast Healthy Cities' Finnish colleagues in the WHO European Network. Alongside speakers from Finland there were contributions from Northern Ireland, Wales.

The event also showcased local innovation in health and how current initiatives are contributing to a better health delivery while tackling health inequalities.

Joan Devlin, Belfast Healthy Cities, said that Belfast can learn from other cities as well as showcasing some excellent technology driven innovation already in place in Northern Ireland.

“Digital technology can play a very positive role in making the delivery of healthcare more efficient and there are some examples where Northern Ireland is leading the way, through our Universities and private companies. Today we heard from the developers of the Experior app which assists doctors in reading X rays and from Ulster University where an app has been developed to aid the prevention of Alzheimer’s Disease.

“This seminar facilitates the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience and we are delighted to host our colleagues from the Kuopio Innovation Centre in Finland and from Public Health Wales. It is important that our health practitioners learn from the experience of other regions.”

Chief Medical Officer Michael McBride said,

“The potential contribution of innovative technologies to health improvement is huge, and we must ensure that this potential is realised for everyone.

Greater use of modern communication technology can increase access to information about health and wellbeing, and support healthy behaviour choices. Health related technologies allow us to interface with and empower citizens at every stage of their health experience – promoting and maintaining health; supporting care; and managing long term conditions.”

Other speakers included Dr Brian O’Connor, European Connected Health Alliance, Deborah Colville, Belfast City Council and John McMullan from the Bryson Group.