



ITN Description

ITN: The International Telemedicine Network (ITN) will create medical information systems for countries in greatest need, where delivering services is the most difficult.

Goal: To share technology and medical expertise that improve the practice of medicine in the World Health Organization's (WHO) Band 1 and 2 countries. ITN will develop technology systems that link isolated healthcare providers to a national healthcare communications network. The ITN also will access international medical resources, such as WiRED's medical databases and the WHO's vast database of biomedical journals, textbooks and monographs.

Overview: Medical practice, by its nature, is an integrative activity, involving networks of professionals whose research and experiences collectively form the body of knowledge about healing. Overall, the medical profession benefits when colleagues work together—especially to advance medical knowledge in undeveloped areas.

Information Technology (IT) lies at the heart of the program, making this collaboration possible. IT has many virtues and offers many options. For one, it saves time and money. We can respond quickly in times of public health emergencies, and we can involve thousands of medical educators at a fraction of the time and expense it would cost to send teams abroad.

ITN will create and coordinate access to medical information and educational tools via an information Gateway currently under development by our partners at MITRE Corporation. We can then supply disenfranchised medical communities with world-class, bio-medical libraries containing thousands of journal titles, textbooks, and monographs.

With real-time and recorded communications, with video and print, with interactive tutorials, individual and group study, the resources we can provide will open the world to medical communities, now closed off. Medical educators, practitioners, and students—now off the grid—can join a global medical community, once far beyond their reach.

In target regions, ITN will procure equipment and arrange for program management locally. This approach will help the local economy, enhance partnership and pride of ownership, and promote local expertise. The primary focus will be on medical schools

and cities with the largest concentration of physicians. However, ITN will also bring current medical information to isolated field clinicians, a group often working alone under difficult conditions.

An ITN advance team, working with local healthcare officials and medical educators, will help determine content and infrastructure needs within each target country. The team will then recommend to the full consortium a package of services best suited to addressing local needs.