

# Cloud to enable 'quantum leaps' in healthcare – IT WEB

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Shez Partovi, MD, Worldwide Lead: Healthcare, Life Sciences & Genomics, Amazon Web Services.

Cloud technology is giving health care innovators an opportunity to deliver the same level of personalised interactive service that people have grown to expect from every other industry.

This emerged during an AWS webinar on service delivery in the health sector, hosted in partnership with ITWeb this week.

As a follow up to an AWS survey and webinar that examined the cloud landscape in Africa and investment in the AWS Africa (Cape Town) region, the [AWS Healthcare Webinar](#) explored how progress towards achieving South Africa's national health goals could be enhanced by cloud technologies.

Panellists in the webinar believed that cloud adoption was progressing well in the local healthcare sector, and that there's evidence of innovation in the way health services are being delivered.

Noting that technology has a profound role to play in improving access to care, Shez Partovi, MD, Worldwide Lead: Healthcare, Life Sciences & Genomics at Amazon Web Services, said AWS could support South Africa's goal of technology enablement of national health insurance (NHI) across infrastructure and communications. "Part of the transformation of healthcare is agility; when [companies] move to a cloud model, they can experiment and then scale."

Partovi said AWS, rated by Gartner as the cloud leader 10 years in a row, had a dedicated healthcare and life sciences practice comprising an expert global team in every geography. "When you are in the healthcare and life sciences industry, you work with our team and never have to explain your business to us because we've all been in the field. Three main things our customers are asking us to help with are to transform their organisations' underlying infrastructure, to help predict disease, and to personalise the health journey of patients using digital experiences, precision diagnosis and precision therapy."

### Technology in SA healthcare

Dr Vuma Magaqa, director of eHealth at the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal, said national and provincial healthcare sought to use technology to improve service delivery.

"One important solution for rural areas is the use of telemedicine, which allows us to treat patients who need high care at the primary care facility, avoiding the risk of the patient dying on the road because of the distance they have to travel in an ambulance," he said, adding that telemedicine also saves on the costs of specialists travelling to rural hospitals, and for training student doctors at rural hospitals.

Dr Magaqa said modernising and connecting primary healthcare facilities would ensure better patient care and relieve the burden on larger regional and district hospitals. "So

there is a plan in place to improve connectivity to primary facilities – particularly in rural areas – through SA Connect,” he said.

Muhammad Simjee, co-founder and CEO of A2D24, echoed the view that primary healthcare should be a key priority: “Our biggest opportunity to improve the system is in primary healthcare – if it worked well it would take the pressure off the entire system.”

He said that technology could be applied to segment patients, automate assessments, and make it easier for doctors to assess patients' condition and so focus attention on complex patients.

#### Cloud-enabled innovation

Simjee said the cloud was making the work of innovators in the healthcare field significantly easier: “Using the available tools and service providers like AWS allows us to completely change the way we operate and the products we can offer. It dramatically cuts the time it takes to get things done, and allows us to be more agile.”

“I can't see any future outside of the cloud,” said Andrew Davies, CEO of Signapps. “As an early stage business using AWS as our platform, we have the ability to scale our infrastructure to deal with demand, but we also have access to a range of services that we are using to build new solutions. They are giving us the ability to innovate quickly at low cost.”

Partovi said: “Most people say they want to interact with their own medical information in digital format; everybody in the world wants ‘my care, my way’. They want the same services we have come to expect of every other industry, and cloud technology is going to enable a quantum leap for every organisation that is going to take those challenges on.”