

# **TELEMEDICINE PILOT PROJECT –THE NIGERIAN COMMUNICATION SATELLITE SOLUTION**

**Abimbola Alale, Abuja, Nigeria.**

## **ABSTRACT**

The Nigerian Government is presently implementing reforms in all sectors, health sector inclusive. The vision for the health sector reform is to improve the health status of all Nigerians, and to attain a level of health care that would permit all Nigerians to live a socially and economically productive life. There are three tiers of health care delivery systems in Nigeria, namely: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Health Care Systems.

Even with the on-going reforms, the Nigerian health sector is still faced with several challenges in meeting the health care requirements of residents of remote and rural areas of the country, and 70% of the Nigerians reside in rural areas. Some of the challenges are inadequate access to emergency treatment in rural areas, inadequate information dissemination, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate number of qualified of medical experts and personnel; this list could go on and on. With so many inadequacies coupled with increased demand for improved health care delivery, telemedicine applications tend to be the ideal solution to address the challenges of healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Telemedicine is one of the pilot projects of the Nigerian Communication Satellite (NigComSat-1) because it promises the opportunity of improved healthcare delivery to the rural communities. The objective of the NigComSat-1 Telemedicine pilot project is to “develop a telemedicine system to improve remote diagnoses and to deliver a cost-effective, better-quality specialist services in Nigeria”.

Telemedicine will have a strong impact in Nigeria by creating local knowledge and offering remote and rural areas easy access to medical care at real time riding on the backbone of NigComSat-1 thereby saving lives, cost, time and scarce resources while achieving the vision of the Nigerian Health Sector reform.