



c/o: Secretariat
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24 June 2015

RE: Response to the Electronic Health Records and Healthcare Identifiers: Legislation Discussion Paper

The National Primary Health Care Partnership (the Partnership) is a unique collaboration of twenty two health organisations, which collectively represent over 100,000 health professionals working in primary health care as well as health consumers. Established in 2006, the NPHCP provides a united national voice for promoting the importance of primary health care in Australia.

While the Partnership supports the move to an opt-out model of participation, we believe that an effective, robust and patient-centred eHealth system will only be achieved if *all* primary health care professionals are active participants, and this should be a key consideration during the 2016 trials.

In addition, the partnership welcome the remit to scope 'healthcare' and anticipate this will reveal the need to actively include a broad array of health professions to better reflect the reality of health delivery in Australia and facilitate integration of health related services.

I have attached the Partnership's Position Paper on eHealth initiatives for your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Damian Mitsch".

Damian Mitsch
Chair

POSITION PAPER:

All primary health care professionals must be engaged in eHealth initiatives

Nationally consistent advances in eHealth¹ are required to enhance the accessibility, timeliness, quality and sustainability of Australia's primary health care system. The National Primary Health Care Partnership (the Partnership) believes that an effective, robust and patient-centred eHealth system will only be achieved if *all* primary health care professionals are active participants.

The Partnership highlights that:

For eHealth to act as a critical enabler in promoting and supporting better communication, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and allied health professionals need to be included in deliberations at all levels;

A complete health record is essential. Broader health professional involvement in eHealth will ensure the right information is available at the right time for improved patient care;

eHealth must allow for new care pathways, rather than replicate existing processes;

eHealth initiatives are vital for improved patient outcomes in rural and remote Australia;

eHealth must empower consumers to be active participants in their care and be consumer accessible and controlled; and

Care must be taken when options for automation are being considered to ensure they provide best clinical care and business outcomes.

With investment, support and broad stakeholder engagement the Partnership believes eHealth will:

- Improve health outcomes by enabling access to health services by Australian's irrespective of location;
- Reduce the need for consumers to repeat their information;
- Enhance the safety and quality of care;
- Address poor communication between providers;
- Reduce the likelihood of service duplication;
- Facilitate effective clinical information sharing with faster, easier access to appropriate health; and
- Assist continuity of care and improve treatment decisions.

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¹ 'eHealth' is the transfer of resources and care by electronic means and encompasses the three main areas of the delivery of health information through the internet and telecommunications, using the power of IT and e-commerce to improve public health service and the use of e-commerce and e-business practices in health systems management.