Australian Government

Australian Digital Health Agency

Media release

Agency invests in local industry to design software for specialists

The Australian Digital Health Agency is partnering with Australian software organisations to design world leading software for specialists.

The Agency has provided nine specialist software vendors with $40,000 to complete designs that seamlessly and securely integrate the My Health Record into their current systems to bring benefits to specialists, such as cardiologists or anaesthetists. In addition to funding, the Agency will provide design expertise to work with each vendor's design teams to co-produce improvements in design with their users.

Following an open approach to market, the Agency is partnering with:

- Best Practice Software
- Clinic to Cloud
- Clinical Computers
- Genie Solutions
- Intrahealth
- Medical-Objects
- Medical Wizard
- Software for Specialists
- Zedmed.

The software organisations will work with the Agency and specialists to develop these designs over the coming months.

Some parts of the health sector have enthusiastically embraced the My Health Record – such as community pharmacy which has increased registrations from 20% in June 2018 to 86% in June 2019. The Agency is now turning its focus to increasing use by specialists over the next 12 months.

Many specialists already use My Health Record through software systems they use in public and private hospitals. Having easy access to the My Health Record system in their private clinics as well will ensure a more complete picture of a patient is available during specialist consultations and improve continuity across care settings.

Associate Professor Mark Lane, President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians says having real-time access will enable specialists to make more informed decisions about patient care and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

"Specialists play a key role in diagnosing and managing complex health conditions, increasingly as part of a care team."

"Having seamless and secure access to My Health Record at the time of a consultation will help ensure specialists are equipped with as much information about a patient as possible when making a challenging clinical decision, such as recommending a course of treatment."

James Scollay, CEO of Genie Solutions, a software provider for medical specialists in Australia, says the collaborative design initiatives will be welcome news for specialists.

"We know that well thought through, integrated workflows will help specialists and their patients get the best value from My Health Record," he said.

"Having over 20 years' experience in the industry, we have a deep understanding of their needs and what they require to run their practices efficiently. That's why we're working closely with the Agency – advocating on behalf of our customers and ensuring their needs are being met.

"This initiative is a positive step forward in this process. Not only will it improve the patient experience, but it will help bridge the gap between medical specialists and other healthcare professionals in the end-to-end management of patient information – ultimately improving health outcomes for patients."

Agency Chief Operating Officer, Bettina McMahon says part of the challenge is designing solutions that meet the needs of specialists, which comprise a hugely diverse group of clinicians.

"Australian specialists are world leaders in innovation – whether in clinical techniques, robotics, or medical engineering. We want to support our local clinical information system vendors to integrate the My Health Record into their software in a way that encourages specialists to embrace these systems in the same way they've embraced other technology.

We won't be specifying what changes should be made to systems. Instead, we will work vendors and their customers – the specialists themselves – to come up with designs that specialists and their practice staff will love to use, and which will benefit from the rich data provided by the My Health Record," said Ms McMahon.

Medical Software Industry Association President Robert Best says medical software is vital to the management of patient care in Australia.

"We support a wide-ranging number of healthcare providers to capture consumers' health information in order to augment clinical decision making," he said.

"The integration of our members' specialist software products with My Health Record may help both clinicians and consumers. This is no small undertaking, but we are pleased the Agency is working collaboratively with Industry to co-develop designs that are fit-for-purpose and draw on the software providers' own knowledge of the sector. The importance of this co-design is to balance the firehose of data for specialists, while ensuring important and meaningful data is presented and delivered in ways that benefit patient outcomes from more informed data-led decisions at the point of consultation."

The Agency ran an expression of interest process in May 2019, where software developers with a clinical information system being used in at least 10 private specialist practices in Australia at 1 May 2019 were invited to apply.

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About the Australian Digital Health Agency

The Agency is tasked with improving health outcomes for all Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems, and implementing *Australia's National Digital Health Strategy – Safe, Seamless, and Secure*: *evolving health and care to meet the needs of modern Australia* in collaboration with partners across the community. The Agency is the System Operator of My Health Record, and provides leadership, coordination, and delivery of a collaborative and innovative approach to utilising technology to support and enhance a clinically safe and connected national health system. These improvements will give individuals more control of their health and their health information, and support healthcare providers to deliver informed healthcare through access to current clinical and treatment information. Further information: www.digitalhealth.gov.au.