



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**31 August 2018**

## **National Asthma Week reminds people with asthma to update their management plans in My Health Record**

This weekend marks the first day of spring, which for 2.5 million people with asthma<sup>1</sup>, is a timely reminder to get prepared for the season ahead, as more temperate weather increases the trigger for an attack.

1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September is also the start of National Asthma week which aims to promote awareness of asthma to the general population and highlight ways to help people manage asthma.

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the lungs where airways become so obstructed that it affects breathing. It's responsible for over 400 deaths and 39,500 hospitalisations per year<sup>2</sup>. The condition has been highlighted recently by a series of severe weather conditions including South Australia's dust storm and Victoria's thunderstorm which led to a sudden increase in asthma related outbreaks.

When it comes to managing asthma and reducing the severity of flare ups, having information on hand is key. Yet only 1 in 5 asthma patients aged 15 years and over has a written asthma plan for managing their condition.

There is great potential to improve the uptake of asthma management plans with My Health Record. People can access current information, care plans and medication advice – whenever they're needed.

This is something Julianne Badenoch, a health clinician and Board Director of the National Asthma Council Australia knows only too well.

"Health can't be looked at in a vacuum and chronic conditions often need to be managed together. This is particularly important in the case of asthma," said Julianne Badenoch, Board Director, National Asthma Council Australia.

"6 out of 10 people with asthma report having at least one other chronic condition and 17 per cent have three or more. A person's shared health summary gives clinicians access to vital information. The safety benefits are significant – medications, allergies, immunisations, past history are all important in consultations where there isn't a previous clinical relationship. This is without even mentioning the potential this information holds in emergency situations."

As asthma patients move through the healthcare system, they can keep records of their respiratory state in My Health Record and share this with their clinical care providers. My Health Record is a repository for:

- Their most recent asthma action plans, which can be uploaded, downloaded and shared with participating clinicians, aged-care facilities and specialists
- Reviews from GPs, nurses, respiratory specialists and asthma educators – forming a link between these clinicians
- Accurate shared health summaries that ensure vital information is available in a timely fashion to treating clinicians

<sup>1</sup> National Asthma Council statistics [www.nationalasthma.org.au](http://www.nationalasthma.org.au)

<sup>2</sup> Asthma Australia 2018 statistics [www.asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au)

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- Prescribing and dispensing histories, which will improve adherence to asthma medications
  - Ongoing spirometry tests which can be stored for future reference

My Health Record is an online summary of a person's key health information. It allows Australians to share and control their health information with doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers from anywhere, at any time.

Australians can manage privacy and control access to their My Health Record including what information gets uploaded and who has access such as family members, carers and healthcare providers.

By the end of 2018, a My Health Record will be created for every Australian, unless they choose not to have one. If people choose not to have a My Health Record, they will be able to opt out of having one created for them before 15 November 2018.

More than 6 million Australians already have a My Health Record and 13,150 healthcare professional organisations are connected, including general practices, hospitals, pharmacies, diagnostic imaging and pathology practices. The My Health Record is already making healthcare management for individuals and healthcare providers easier and safer and could save lives in an emergency situation.

More information on My Health Record can be found at [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au). People who do not want a My Health Record can opt out by visiting the My Health Record website or by calling 1800 723 471 for phone-based assistance. Additional support is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with limited digital literacy, and those living in rural and remote regions.

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