



MEDIA RELEASE

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My Health Record a potential life saver for Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can benefit by My Health Record playing a vital role in helping manage their healthcare and protecting them from medical misadventures which can occur due to communication breakdowns.

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

Ms Mary Patetsos, Chairperson of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), has welcomed the move to expand My Health Record for all Australians: "FECCA believes that My Health record has many benefits for people of CALD background particularly those who are older or who have lower levels of English proficiency. The My Health Record will support communication between CALD consumers and their health provider, leading to better outcomes.

"The benefits of My Health Record include reduced hospital admissions, reduced duplication of tests, better-coordinated care, and better informed treatment decisions. Doctors, pharmacists and authorised healthcare providers will be able to access a person's My Health Record to assist in their treatment of patients and issues such as prescription of medicines and advance care planning.

"It is also important that CALD consumers are comfortable engaging with the tool – and know how to opt out if they wish," said Ms Patetsos.

Information on My Health Record is available in over 18 languages and is enabled for those with vision impairment. One in five Australians speak a non-English language at home, English is not the first language for 3.5 million people – that's 15 per cent of the population. Language can be a major barrier for many Australians engaging in their health care and seeking coordinated care.

Being able to provide integrated care from a patient's different healthcare providers helps clinicians find vital information more quickly and is why Dr Chris Moy, GP and Clinical Reference Lead for My Health Record believes it's vital CALD Australians consider the benefits of My Health Record.

"Australia is a country made more vibrant by our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. However, many CALD Australians face difficulties explaining their previous journeys through the health system to a health provider, including their medical history, medications and allergies. This can not only be frustrating for the individual, but can greatly undermine their care if they have serious or complex conditions. They are not only at risk of experiencing poorer health outcomes, but also viewing medical appointments as so daunting that they delay seeking help until it becomes critical," said Dr Chris Moy.

"My Health Record is a game changer in providing a health provider with immediate access to key information about the individual's medical history and helps support CALD Australians to overcome barriers of language and improves their continuity of care. It will reduce harm caused by medication errors because people and their healthcare providers will have access to important information about medicines and allergies. This could save your life in an emergency.

"It actually helps CALD Australians to take control of their health by allowing them to carry their healthcare history in their pocket or on their mobile phones. They will be less hampered by language at



the pharmacy or the doctor's surgery. They can simply direct healthcare providers to their electronic record.

“Most importantly, a doctor in a consulting room will spend less time having to piece together basic information, and can instead focus on actually caring for the patient in front of them, said Dr Chris Moy.”

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.

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Background

FECCA has partnered with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) to provide information for members and stakeholders about My Health Record. The partnership aims to provide information about My Health Record and its benefits for all Australians, and to advise those who choose not to have one how to opt out.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Our role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of our constituency to government, business and the broader community.

More information on My Health Record can be found at 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.

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.