



My Health Record

Factsheet: My Health Record for mental health

What is My Health Record?

My Health Record is a secure online summary of an individual's health information and is available to all Australians. Healthcare providers authorised by their healthcare organisation can access My Health Record to view and add consumer health information.

My Health Record does not replace existing health records and may not include every interaction that a consumer has had with the healthcare system. Rather, it supplements existing records with a high-value, shared source of an individual's health information that can improve care planning and decision making across Australia's health system.

"I don't want to have to retell my story again and again and re-live the pain every time"

Healthcare providers should verify the information within an individual's My Health Record and, where necessary, with other healthcare providers.

Healthcare providers can access the My Health Record system through conformant clinical software to view and upload information, or via the view-only National Provider Portal without conformant software.

How can My Health Record better support the mental health sector?

Healthcare providers are seen as trusted advisors for questions about My Health Record. It is common for consumers within the mental health sector to have a complex mix of symptoms, potential comorbidities, as well as potential polypharmacy exposure.

Many consumers have expressed the importance of having a shared health record that follows them throughout their mental health journey. The My Health Record enables consumers and their care providers to keep track of their health history and medications and it promotes continuity of care for transient and multi-service cohorts, reducing the need for consumers to retell their "mental health story".

The My Health Record provides in-built access controls for consumers, giving them greater autonomy over their health information.

Respecting an individual's decision to authorise their healthcare provider to access, not access, or upload documents to their My Health Record is a great way to empower consumers in their mental health journey, as well as providing dignity and choice in their care.

Benefits of My Health Record



Greater understanding and visibility between healthcare professionals involved in a consumer's health and care



Improved access to clinical information, especially in the context of an emergency



Enhanced continuity of care in a consumer's mental health journey



Enhanced capacity to better coordinate care and provide support for consumers and their carers



Improved access to medication history and visibility of medications prescribed



Enhanced patient self-management

Privacy, security and consent for mental health providers

Do I need permission?

Under the *My Health Records Act 2012*, healthcare organisations authorise employees providing services to a healthcare consumer to view and upload information to the My Health Record system. Subject to certain situations*, there is no requirement for a healthcare provider to obtain consent prior to uploading or accessing clinical information. However, it is considered good clinical practice to advise a consumer before uploading clinical information, particularly if this information might be considered sensitive. Consumers can request that a particular document not be uploaded and healthcare providers must comply with such requests.



SECURITY

The Agency uses a range of technologies to protect the sensitive personal and health information held in the My Health Record system. These include firewalls to block unauthorised access, audit logs to track access to records, initial and regular anti-virus scanning of documents uploaded to records, and systems monitoring to detect suspicious activity.

A range of security processes limit access to the My Health Record system, and all external software goes through a conformance process.



EMERGENCY ACCESS

In emergency situations, treating clinicians can exercise a 'break glass' facility to allow temporary access to a patient's My Health Record regardless of the patient's privacy and security settings. However, patients may be notified about any emergency access by text or email and if a patient has removed a document from their My Health Record, it will not be accessible. Any instances of emergency access will appear in the patient's Access History.



Representatives

Mental health consumers may find it beneficial to involve other people, such as a carer, family member or a trusted friend, to have access to their My Health Record.



NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE

Consumers can appoint someone as a nominated representative in their My Health Record. All nominated representatives must act in accordance with the consumer's will and preferences. They can be provided with one of the following types of access:

General access – they can view all documents, except those that have been marked as restricted.

Restricted access – they can view all documents, including those that have been marked as restricted.

Full access – they can view all documents and add information to a record.



AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES

An authorised representative is someone who can manage a My Health Record on someone's behalf if they cannot manage their own record or don't have the capacity to make decisions for themselves.

Authorised representatives can make decisions about how another person's My Health Record is managed and how information in that person's My Health Record is accessed. Multiple people can be authorised representatives for someone.

A parent (or guardian) is usually eligible to be an authorised representative for their child until the age of 14.

* Healthcare providers do not need consent to view. In Qld, ACT and NSW providers may require express consent to upload specified types of sensitive information (under their local privacy laws).

How can individuals control access to their My Health Record?

Consumer privacy, access and control functions

Designated healthcare providers involved in a consumer's healthcare can access, view, upload and author clinical documents on their My Health Record. Authorised employees with legitimate need to access the My Health Record system may also view documents on My Health Record. Consumers can control who has access to, or delete documents and Medicare information from, their My Health Record at any time.



LIMITING ACCESS

Individuals have a number of mechanisms available to them to manage the content of, and to control access to, their and/or their dependant's My Health Record(s). These include:

- **limiting access to the whole of their record** through a **restricted access code (RAC)** that needs to be given to healthcare provider organisations who they wish to grant access
- **limiting access to specific documents** in their My Health Record through a **limited document access code (LDAC)** to give select healthcare provider organisations access to the restricted set of documents, for example if they wish to restrict their mental health related records
- **turning off automatic checking for a My Health Record**, which will prevent a healthcare provider organisation being automatically notified via their local clinical software if a person has a record.



CONSUMER CHOICE TO UPLOAD

Individuals may expressly inform a healthcare provider organisation that they do not want certain information to be uploaded to their My Health Record. The healthcare provider organisation must comply with the request.



TRACKING ACCESS

Individuals can:

- see a list of healthcare organisations that have accessed their record
- change the level of access they wish particular healthcare organisations to have, including revoking access (except in the case of an emergency)
- be notified by email or SMS when certain activities occur in their My Health Record, e.g. a new healthcare organisation accesses their My Health Record.



REMOVING DOCUMENTS

Individuals have the ability to remove individual documents from their record. Removed documents will not be available to the consumer or healthcare provider organisations, including in an emergency; however, they are retained by the My Health Record System Operator for medico-legal purposes. The only way to permanently delete documents is to cancel a consumer's My Health Record, at which point all information, including any backups, will be permanently deleted from the system.



- Consumers can control what documents are in their My Health Record and which healthcare organisations can access their information
- It is against the law for someone to deliberately look at a consumer's record unless it is to provide health care services. There are serious penalties for unlawful access
- Consumer's information is not searchable online. Healthcare organisations must be registered to use My Health Record and connect to it using a secure computer program or portal
- My Health Record information will not be given to police or other government agencies, unless it is required to by a court or similar order



Managing mental health in vulnerable communities

Working with vulnerable consumers and their mental health

Mental health consumers from vulnerable communities face increased likelihood of stigma and discrimination from their community or healthcare providers, and inaccessible or culturally and linguistically inappropriate services. This experience may resonate particularly with:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- culturally and linguistically diverse persons including recent immigrants
- people with disabilities
- older Australians
- youth (15-24 years old)
- children (<15 years old)
- homeless and economically disadvantaged.



ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY

As part of providing a culturally sensitive and accessible care experience for consumers, healthcare providers can:

- respect consumer's dignity and choice in care
- respect a consumer's privacy
- holistically capture a consumer's cultural and linguistic identity in their record.

For more information on how the My Health Record can enhance the consumer care experience please refer to the **My Health Record Mental Health Toolkit** and associated resources on the [My Health Record website](#).



How My Health Record benefits vulnerable people

Apart from aiding in culturally and linguistically aware, and trauma-informed, care, My Health Record can also benefit vulnerable consumers through:

- limiting an individual's need to retell their mental health trauma story
- empowering consumers with the ability to access and control their health information as part of their recovery-oriented practice
- promoting continuity of care for rural, remote, consumers who have multiple healthcare providers and transient communities
- improving multidisciplinary care teams' access to clinical information, particularly for complex cases accessing multiple services
- preventing re-traumatisation of the person with mental health illness
- holistically capturing a consumer's cultural, spiritual and kinship identity in MHR to better inform their social and emotional wellbeing
- limiting information being lost in translation when English is not someone's first language.



The following resources are available to promote accessibility in care for vulnerable consumers:

- **Translation Information Services**
Phone: 131 450
Website: www.tisnational.gov.au
- **National Relay Service**
Call or TTY 1800 555 660
SMS 0416 001 350

For more information go to:

MyHealthRecord.gov.au
Help line 1800 723 471



Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency