

EHEALTH FOR ALLIED HEALTH PRACTITIONERS



In recent years the Australian government has invested significant resources to advance eHealth initiatives such as the My Health Record. However until now, the allied health community has been limited in their ability to participate. Barriers have included a lack of access to conformant software, the complexity of the registration process and limited hands-on support and training.

Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), of whom this organisation is a member, has advocated strongly for the Australian government to support greater allied health involvement. That work has resulted in an increased focus on allied health and the launch of several allied health-focused eHealth projects:

- Supporting allied health practitioners in North Queensland and the Nepean Blue Mountains region to register for and contribute to the My Health Record system as part of the My Health Record opt-out trials
- Improving the accessibility of the My Health Record for allied health practitioners, including streamlining the registration process for both AHPRA-regulated and self-regulating professions
- Increasing registrations for the National Health Services Directory (NHSD) by allied health practitioners

My Health Record opt-out trials

AHPA's first priority is supporting the opt-out trials in North Queensland and the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (PHN) regions which formally begin on July 15th of this year. AHPA is currently working with both PHNs and the allied health member associations to identify allied health practitioners with an interest in eHealth and the My Health Record system. AHPA and the local PHN will work with interested practitioners to assist them to register for the My Health Record system and to access software that allows them to create event summaries for their patients.

To assist with providing information and training, AHPA is co-presenting My Health Record workshops with the first round to be held in Penrith, Hawkesbury, Katoomba and Lithgow from the 19th July. Practitioners will have the opportunity to see the eHealth system in action, to find out more about My Health Record-conformant practice software options and to meet with PHN and AHPA staff to discuss their needs with regards to eHealth. Additional workshops are currently being planned for North Queensland.

Increasing allied health registrations for the My Health Record system

AHPA's work also focuses on increasing allied health registrations for the My Health Record system. Greater numbers of registered allied health practitioners increases the potential for the sharing of patient health information between health professionals via the My Health Record system. Just as importantly, increased allied health registrations will support continued national advocacy by AHPA on behalf of the allied health community. A significant increase in allied health provider registrations will send a strong message to the Australian government about the level of interest and potential for allied health participation in the My Health Record system and other digital health initiatives.

Allied Health Digital Health Survey

AHPA recently worked with the Department of Health and National eHealth Transition Authority (NEHTA) to undertake an Allied Health Digital Health Survey. Close to 2500 practitioners participated in the survey, providing valuable information and helping us to understand more about digitisation among allied health practitioners. The results showed that there is a significant amount of interest in eHealth among the allied health community. However the survey also showed that many practitioners still felt they didn't fully understand the current eHealth initiatives. To help address that, AHPA will be providing updates like this one with information and links to resources about key eHealth topics over the coming months. This month we are starting with an introduction to the My Health Record system.

AHPA acknowledges the support of the Australian Government in funding these projects.

INTRODUCING THE MY HEALTH RECORD SYSTEM

What is a My Health Record?

The My Health Record is a digital patient file designed to hold electronic health documents created by different health professionals. Electronic documents such as Shared Health Summaries and Event Summaries containing health information can be created and added to the My Health Record by health providers. This allows other health professionals involved in an individual's care to see important health information such as previous treatments, diagnoses, allergies and immunisations. The My Health Record can also optionally hold records from the Medicare (MBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Schemes (PBS) such as prior treatments or medications that have been prescribed and dispensed (MBS and PBS records do not include details of treatments or test results).

A wide range of health information can be held in a My Health Record. Typically a My Health Record might include a shared health summary created by a general practitioner as well as event summaries created by a range of health professionals such as allied health practitioners and providing details about a particular treatment or issue. [Click here](#) for a brief description and comparison of the two document types. Other types of electronic health information include radiology and pathology results and referral and hospital discharge documents. Please note that when a My Health Record is created, it will not yet contain health information from health providers.

How can allied health practitioners access the My Health Record system?

Accessing the My Health Record system first requires you to register. Access is available to any registered health provider through a registered health provider organisation. Registering consists of three different components:

1. Registering for the Health Identifier service
2. Registering to use the My Health Record system
3. Registering for Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificates.

All three steps can be done at the same time though allied health practitioners not registered through AHPRA must also apply for an Individual Healthcare Provider Identifier number. [Click here for a summary of the process.](#)

Once you are registered, accessing a patient's My Health Record can be done in one of two ways:

1. **Accessing the [My Health Record Provider Portal](#) via a web browser.** This option is limited to the viewing of health information in a patient's My Health Record. It does not allow practitioners to contribute information.
2. **Accessing the My Health Record system via your practice software.** If your practice software has My Health Record functionality, you can set it up to allow you to view and download information from your patient's My Health Record. You will also have the option to add information such as an Event Summary document that details the treatment you have provided.

Where can I find out more about the My Health Record system?

A comprehensive training portal has been developed by the Australian Government to assist you in using the My Health Record system. You can access the portal at <https://myhealthrecord.e3learning.com.au/>. You can also contact the My Health Record support team by phone on 1800 723 471 if you have questions or require assistance.

Keeping up to date: the Department of Health My Health Record eBulletin

The Department of Health My Health Record eBulletin provides up-to-date My Health Record information, case studies as well as sections that address questions and discuss new developments to the system. AHPA will be contributing information to the eBulletin throughout the trial. [Please click here](#) to see the latest edition of the eBulletin.