

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACHI welcomes the Release of the PCEHR Review

The Australasian College of Health Informatics (ACHI) welcomes the release of the report of the review into the PCEHR, Australia's national electronic health record system. The release of the report in addition to the budget announcement of continued PCEHR funding provides greater clarity to the immediate future of the PCEHR.

The College believes that a change of the PCEHR consent model to 'opt-out' whilst preserving the existing patient controls would be a welcome move to increase adoption, and enhance the usefulness of the PCEHR for patients, consumers and clinicians.

However, there remain two specific areas of concern to the College:

1: The lack of a clear pathway to develop and implement clear coding standards for atomic data. The review report emphasises useability and clinical workflows, but the College believes the benefits from having large amounts of information from discharge summaries, care plans and pathology will only come if the data is computer readable and therefore useable. Research reviewed by the College indicates that the more an Electronic Health Record can collate data, the more effective it is in supporting clinicians to provide better and more affordable healthcare.

2: The lack of any clear structure devoted to clinical safety and minimising patient risk of harm through poor, missing, out of date or hard to find information. "There are well developed systems for managing clinical safety in healthcare, and many examples of good governance of the special and very real risks associated with health IT in other nations," remarked College president associate professor Chris Pearce, "Australians using the My Health Record (MyHR) should do so knowing that it is a safe system".

The Australasian College of Health Informatics has regularly contributed and commented on the national healthcare reform policies including the PCEHR and looks forward to continuing its work with government on the consultation program.

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