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## Media release

### Medical profession and the community embracing technology and digital health

New research commissioned by the Australian Digital Health Agency confirms anecdotal evidence that Australians are now more open to using digital technology in healthcare and can see the importance of technology to improve health outcomes.

The Agency focus over 2019 was connecting primary healthcare providers such as GPs and pharmacists to the My Health Record system and to date over 90% of both professions are now registered to upload and view documents.

A new survey of healthcare practitioners conducted in late April shows that in particular, 90% of specialists are now open to using more technology when caring for their patients, including using apps and online self-service.

In another survey which evaluates consumer engagement with digital health services there has been a marked increase in awareness of telehealth and remote healthcare since the end of March, with the majority of people surveyed saying that they can get access to healthcare services when they need them. This survey also shows that there are still some gaps in people's knowledge about the availability of personal health information digitally, and some concerns that their healthcare providers may not use technology in the best possible way.

Agency CEO Bettina McMahon said the research provides insight on attitudinal change towards the value of technology in healthcare in the face of COVID-19 as providers and consumers had embraced digital health tools and telehealth services.

"We've seen a significant increase in digital health over the past three months as the health system has fast tracked its adoption of technology to deliver health services in a COVID world. This new research shows that we can expect digital health to remain a feature of healthcare into the future, now that consumers and healthcare professionals have experienced the convenience and benefits technology can bring."

"Our research also reaffirms that the technology available may not be ideal for everyone and that not all healthcare providers want to use it. The Agency will continue to work with the health tech sector to improve the experience for healthcare professionals using IT in busy healthcare settings and the connection of their systems across the health sector."

"Healthcare practitioners across the board are keen to do training in digital health services," Ms McMahon said. "That is why we are working with peak associations to develop professional development programs such as the one for nurses and midwives which will be launched later this year. We have also turned our attention to improving specialists' adoption of technology – including the My Health Record – by working with the software companies in this market and developing education and training materials."

The Agency's initial activities to increase use of national digital services including the My Health Record was focussed on GPs, community pharmacists, public and private hospitals, and pathology and diagnostic imaging laboratories. It made sense to firstly work with healthcare providers who consumers deal with most and where levels of computerisation were already high.



“We are working with the tech industry to integrate standard medical terminology, national patient and provider identifiers, standardised secure messaging and the My Health Record into the systems specialists and other providers are already using – enabling them to access the most up to date patient health information in a safe, secure, and simple way,” Ms McMahon said.

“The importance of using technology to support our health workers to improve patient outcomes cannot be underestimated. We are working hard to improve their experience with technology so that Australians can benefit from digital health in the ‘new normal’ of health service delivery.”

#### **Key My Health Record statistics – May 2020**

- 22.77 million total My Health Records
- More than 19.2 million records, or 85 per cent, now have data in them
- 2.05 billion documents uploaded to My Health Record
- 70 million clinical documents
- 136 million medicine documents
- 1.83 billion Medicare documents
- 97 per cent of pharmacies registered and 78% using
- 92 per cent of GPs registered and 82% using
- 95 per cent of public hospitals registered and 91% using
- The most recent information is available at <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/statistics>

#### **Media contact**

Media Team

Mobile: 0428 772 421 Email: [media@digitalhealth.gov.au](mailto:media@digitalhealth.gov.au)

#### **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](http://www.digitalhealth.gov.au).