

Monday, 18 November 2019

More support for frontline emergency care staff

A national initiative launched today will support the time-critical work and informed decision making of frontline hospital emergency department (ED) clinicians through the use of patients' My Health Record.

With over 22 million Australians now having a My Health Record, a suite of clinical tools and resources released today at the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) 36th Annual Scientific Meeting 2019 will support ED staff using the system to inform clinical decision-making on the frontline of emergency care.

The tools and resources, developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) in partnership with ACEM, include a guide for ED clinicians with practical information on accessing up-to-date My Health Record data for people requiring emergency care.

Dr Andrew Hugman, emergency physician and Fellow of ACEM, is the Commission's Clinical Lead on the project. He explained: "Immediate access to additional information about a patient's medical history can be crucial in time-critical settings such as EDs. My Health Record facilitates clinicians' viewing of material that is otherwise hard to see outside of their regular hospital network. It's not surprising that there is increasing interest among ED clinicians to better understand the system."

More than 40% of emergency department presentations occur out of normal business hours. The My Health Record system can support hospital clinicians to access patient information out-of-hours and from outside their local hospital network.

"My Health Record does not replace information stored in local hospital records, but it can help us to retrieve other information more quickly, avoiding reliance on phone calls and fax machines to places like private pathology and radiology providers," Dr Hugman explained.

"Ultimately, the better informed the clinician, the better the decision making about their patients' care. Australian health care is in the midst of a digital transformation, so it is essential all clinicians are made aware of how we can use digital innovation to achieve the best outcomes for our patients.

"This new guide explains the 'what' and 'why' of My Health Record to ED clinicians and where it can fit into their current practice. It has been written for clinicians by clinicians," Dr Hugman said.

There has been a significant increase in the amount of clinical information flowing into the My Health Record system since February 2019. The rapidly expanding system already contains more than 3.4 million shared health summaries, 37 million prescriptions and 22 million pathology reports.

Professor Meredith Makeham, Chief Medical Adviser for the Australian Digital Health Agency and general practitioner, said My Health Record is making positive change in how clinicians treat patients. "We are already seeing benefits to the health care of Australians, which will continue to grow as more health providers involved in a patient's care contribute and access patient information on their My Health Record.

“This practical guide was specifically developed for emergency departments, but will be useful to any clinician working in a hospital setting who wants to further understand how My Health Record can better improve health outcomes,” said Professor Makeham.

The guide describes the types of clinical documents that may be included in a patient’s My Health Record and the origin of that information. There is also a focus on protecting vulnerable patient groups and legislative requirements that ED clinicians need to be aware of.

This year more than 1,300 ED staff from large tertiary referral facilities to small remote hospitals have attended one of the awareness sessions held by the Commission across Australia as part of a My Health Record in ED Roadshow, with more planned following the release of the guide.

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The *Emergency Department Clinicians’ Guide to My Health Record* will be launched today by the Commission’s Dr Andrew Hugman, the Agency’s Professor Meredith Makeham, and the Chair of ACEM’s Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnerships Dr Didier Palmer, during the peak body’s Annual Scientific Meeting in Hobart.

Dr Didier Palmer said: “We are pleased to support the launch of this important resource alongside both national agencies.

“ACEM believes there is a strong case for emergency department clinicians to use My Health Record as part of routine care. The system helps close the information gap between general practice and hospital care, and will help deliver improved health outcomes for all Australians with a My Health Record.”

ENDS

For more information visit: safetyandquality.gov.au/MHR

Social media hashtag: **#MHRinED**

Media enquiries

Angela Jackson, Media and Communications Manager, (02) 9126 3513 or 0407 213 522
angela.jackson@safetyandquality.gov.au

Ron Cuadra, Director, Communications, (02) 9126 3612 or 0429 211 376
ron.cuadra@safetyandquality.gov.au

Michael Charlton, Media Manager, 0436 926 696
michael.charlton@digitalhealth.gov.au

About the Commission

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is an Australian Government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in the safety and quality of health care based on the best available evidence. By working in partnership with patients, carers, clinicians, the Australian, state and territory

health systems, the private sector, managers and healthcare organisations, the Commission aims to ensure that the health system is better informed, supported and organised to deliver safe and high-quality care.

www.safetyandquality.gov.au

About the Australian Digital Health Agency

The Australian Digital Health Agency is tasked with improving health outcomes for all Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems, and implementing [Australia's National Digital Health Agency – 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.

www.digitalhealth.gov.au

About ACEM

Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) is the peak body for emergency medicine in Australia and New Zealand, responsible for training emergency physicians and advancement of professional standards.

www.acem.org.au