

Regional centres sign up to the Shared Electronic Health Record

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Territorians are signing up to participate in an electronic system which is connecting health services under the eHealth NT program.

The eHealth NT Shared Electronic Health Record allows individuals to have their important health information stored in a secure repository, accessible from multiple health sites, with their consent. The Territory is a national leader in the implementation of the new system.

The new service is particularly valuable for individuals who change GPs, or who use multiple health services, as it helps health care providers, including hospitals, GPs and health centres, to securely access an up-to-date overview of an individual's medical history.

Director of eHealth NT Shared Electronic Health Record, John Fletcher, said instant access to up-to-date health information can mean the difference between life and death for patients, particularly in an emergency situation.

"This service being implemented across the Territory means health consumers can be reassured that there is a secure system that allows doctors, and other health care providers, to access their health information. For a highly mobile population, as the Territory has, this system represents a major leap in patient care, especially for people who use different GPs, or a number of health services. Individuals no longer have to request copies of information from their patient records, remember medications, and other treatment information – it's already there, and instantly accessible, if you're signed up for the Shared Electronic Health Record.

"Electronic transfer of health information is a much quicker, more secure and streamlined process. It's a giant leap forward in improving continuity of care, particularly for Indigenous Territorians. Implementation has only been possible because of the support of the Major Aboriginal Medical Services and their representative bodies, AMSANT and KRAHRS, Northern Territory Public Hospitals and Private GP Practices." Mr Fletcher said.

Katherine Region registrations are largely completed and registration teams are currently targeting the areas of Batchelor, Adelaide River, Acacia, and Borroloola, Daly River, Nguiu, Darwin as well as residents living in the Tennant Creek / Barkly areas where a significant number of Territorians have registered and in Central Australia at communities including Ali Curung, Amatjere, Willora and Tara.

Opportunities for registration will also be available at the Imparja Cup in Alice Springs between February 11 and February 16.

To date more than 15,000 Territorians have registered to participate in the SEHR and over 900 professionals are registered participants.

media release

The eHealth NT Shared Electronic Health Record is a joint Australian and NT Government initiative. It stores patients' summaries electronically in a secure repository which provides rapid access for participating providers, and eliminates the need for paper records to be faxed or mailed, or for multiple telephone calls between providers.

The Shared Electronic Health Record was first trialled in Katherine after research had shown that communications barriers between different providers of health care for Indigenous Territorians were resulting in hospital re-admissions, service duplications, and self-discharges – all having a potential for adverse health outcomes.

Media Contact: Cameron Jackson, DHCS Media support officer 0401 116 144