



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

COAG Health Services
*Establishing the Foundations for a National Electronic
Health Records System*

Why is this important?

- Australians' health information currently exists in different formats in many locations, from handwritten clinical notes to some electronic information. This has the potential to lead to inappropriate or uncoordinated treatment, medication errors and duplication of tests or procedures. In addition to the risks posed for the patient by miscommunication between health providers, uncoordinated treatment places financial burden on the health system.
- A national electronic health records system will improve safety for patients and increase efficiency for healthcare providers.

Who will benefit?

- This will allow patients to have better control over who can access their medical records and enable them to play a more active role in managing their own health care. In addition, healthcare providers, with their patients' consent, will find it easier to communicate safely and securely with each other about patients and their health.

What funding is the Government committing to the initiative?

- This measure forms part of the Government's contribution to the COAG Health Services package, as announced on 10 February 2006.
- The Commonwealth, jointly with state and territory governments, will provide new funding of \$129.3 million over three years to accelerate work on a national electronic health records system to improve safety for patients and increase efficiency for healthcare providers.
- The Commonwealth share is \$64.6 million over three years (\$70.2 million including departmental costs), with the states and territories contributing the remaining 50 per cent towards the agreed costs.

What have we done in the past?

- All Australian Health Ministers agreed in 2004 to establish the National e-Health Transition Authority (NeHTA) to accelerate the development of e-health on behalf of all jurisdictions.

When will the initiative conclude?

- This initiative will be reviewed for the 2009-10 Budget.