



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

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### **Road map for Healthconnect**

Implementation of the national system of electronic patient health records, *HealthConnect*, has moved a step closer with the release of two key documents to guide future development.

*HealthConnect* will ultimately link electronic health systems in all states and territories to allow secure and accurate transfer and management of patient medical information. Over time, it will create comprehensive patient medical histories which will be available to patients and, with patients' consent, their doctors, at any place or time they are needed.

The documents, 'Lessons Learned from the *MediConnect* Field Test and *HealthConnect* Trials' and '*HealthConnect* Implementation Strategy' jointly provide a road map to the Australian Government and state and territory governments on setting up *HealthConnect* and monitoring its progress. They will ensure that the nation works in partnership on e-health.

The 'Lessons Learned' report brings together the findings from the largest e-health trials ever conducted in Australia, which provided valuable practical lessons for *HealthConnect*. More than 5000 consumers and 300 GPs, pharmacists and health service providers took part in the *MediConnect* and *HealthConnect* trials over two years. I thank them for their participation and goodwill.

The revised implementation strategy reflects the challenge of connecting many different IT systems within the broad health sector to work together. The strategy will continue to develop as the roll out of *HealthConnect*, building on existing e-health initiatives, moves from a regional basis towards state-wide and eventually nation-wide operation.

Implementation of *HealthConnect* has begun in Tasmania, South Australia and the Katherine region of the Northern Territory, while discussions and other projects are underway in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the ACT.

Consumers will be the big winners from *HealthConnect*. Currently, patient records sit in paper files in different doctors' surgeries, hospitals and pharmacies. Integrated systems will improve the safety and quality of patient care, delivering to patients the information they need to get involved in managing their own health.

The reports are available at [www.healthconnect.gov.au](http://www.healthconnect.gov.au)

**For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.**

## HealthConnect Implementation – Fact Sheet

### What's new

- the HealthConnect Implementation Strategy – a new approach to the implementation of HealthConnect, the national system of electronic health records
- the 'Lessons Learned from the MediConnect Field Test and HealthConnect Trials' report brings together the findings from the four years of HealthConnect trials and the MediConnect field test.

### Key features of the new strategy

- a partnership approach – governments working with health professionals, industry and consumers
- an overarching change management strategy focusing on people, not just technology
- support for advanced models of care
- driven by quality and safety improvements in the delivery of health services
- a focus on making things happen
- a goal of putting the right information with the right person at the right time.

### Background

Information technology is revolutionising the way the health care sector manages consumer health information. With increasing use of computer-based records, the potential for this technology to save lives and money far outweighs the initial costs.

HealthConnect will allow health care providers to securely transfer clinical information such as electronic referrals, hospital discharge summary reports, prescriptions, imaging and pathology requests and results.

HealthConnect will be secure, confidential and private. Each person will decide who can access his or her health records and which records may be held in the system.

Over time, HealthConnect will make vital information about people's medical histories available to them, and with their consent, to their doctors and other health care professionals no matter where they are.

### About HealthConnect

Over the past four years, the Australian Government, in partnership with states and territories, has run trials of HealthConnect in several locations. These have shown that HealthConnect can work and that consumers and health care providers support the concept of shareable electronic health records.

The Australian Government has committed \$128 million over four years to introduce HealthConnect nationally. Implementation of HealthConnect has begun in Tasmania, South Australia and the Katherine region of the Northern Territory, and discussions on implementation projects are underway with New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the ACT.

## Where to from here for HealthConnect

The 'Lessons Learned' report and the HealthConnect Implementation Strategy together provide the road map to guide implementing HealthConnect and monitoring its progress. The revised strategy reflects the major challenge getting the many different existing health information systems to work together in the same way Australians expect general practitioners, specialists and nurses to work together when looking after a patient.

Under the umbrella of the HealthConnect Implementation Strategy, the Australian Government and state and territory governments are working in partnership with health care providers, consumers and industry to make sure all electronic health systems use the same set of national standards to securely store and manage health information. In this way, HealthConnect will help link electronic health projects in all states and territories so vital health information is available for improved diagnoses and health outcomes.

HealthConnect will build on existing projects and infrastructure to achieve short-term results (point-to-point electronic transfer of clinical information between health care providers) and drive longer-term outcomes (improved quality and safety of health care for consumers).

Australia is a world leader in electronic health systems. Major projects like HealthConnect are complex and can take several years to develop, but HealthConnect is on target to meet its long term objectives.

### Benefits for providers

- health care providers get quick, reliable access to a broader range of information
- a secure means of exchanging information among a patients' care team
- a reduction in red tape by providing products and services that allow health care providers to work more efficiently.

### Benefits for consumers

- an individual electronic health record available nationally, with consumer control over access
- information tools for individuals to better manage their own health, including access to their own records
- a release from the burden of having to remember and repeat important health history every time a consumer comes into contact with the health system.

### More information

Consultation with key stakeholders, research and evaluation information from the trials have been brought together in several major documents to guide the development and implementation of HealthConnect. These documents, which include the Lessons Learned from the MediConnect Field Test and HealthConnect Trials Report, the HealthConnect Implementation Strategy and the Legal Issues Report, together with earlier published HealthConnect documents such as the indicative benefits report and the benefits realisation framework, are available on the HealthConnect web site at [www.healthconnect.gov.au](http://www.healthconnect.gov.au) .