

**MEDIA RELEASE**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018

**Why leave my Health on Record?**

The question really is, would you benefit from having a My Health Record? Recently there has been some vigorous debate about the benefits or drawbacks of having a My Health Record. This is because of the Australian Government's decision to provide us all with an online health record by the end of this year, 2018. Sydney North Primary Health Network is here to help answer some key questions or concerns and dispel any myths you may have heard when it comes to the benefits of having a My Health Record.

**First – let's establish in simple language what a My Health Record is?**

My Health Record is an individualised online summary of your key health information that all Australians will get unless they tell the Australian Government they don't want one by November 15 this year.

When you have a My Health Record, your health information can be viewed securely online, from anywhere, at any time – even if you move or travel. You can access your health information from any computer or device that is connected to the internet. Whether you're visiting a GP for a health check, or in an emergency room following a serious accident and are unable to talk, healthcare providers involved in your care can access relevant health information, such as:

- Allergies;
- Medical history and emergency contacts;
- Medicines you are taking;
- Medical conditions you have been diagnosed with; and even
- Pathology test results like blood tests;
- Advance Care Plans.

Dr Hans Blom, a local General Practitioner from the Northern Beaches of Sydney, explains, "The My Health Record will bring together information from services such as general practice, hospitals and specialists, including discharge summaries from hospitals, test results, specialist referrals, vaccinations, patient health history, medicines and allergies. I find that for my patients with complicated health conditions or for those who, for one reason or another, are not able to easily recall their medical details, it makes it so much easier for other health professionals to make appropriate care decisions".

Rose O'Donnell is 70 years of age, the carer for her 92-year-old mother (who lives with her), mother of a 30-year-old son with chronic back issues and a grandmother of two.

She is amazed by the My Health Record and the benefits it brings to her and her family.

"At age 92 my mother has several chronic conditions including asthma, sinus problems, dry eyes, reflux, low blood pressure and a more serious condition of the nervous system that affects the use of her left hand. Most of the conditions are just associated with ageing, but it means she has a lot of medications to take and a lot more allergies.

"For decades we were told to carry around a list of her medications and allergies on a piece of paper in her pocket or purse. We would often forget it or question whether it was up to date. Now with the My Health Record, this is all information we put up there for Mum and ask her GP to do the same.

"Mum and I get sick and tired of explaining all of these health conditions and the medications to different Doctors so to have it all up on the My Health Record saves time and stops medical professionals from asking the same questions over and over and unnecessarily experimenting with medications. Having a My Health Record can also help you get the right treatment. It's a convenient

way to record and track your own health information over time. And it is controlled by you,” says Rose.

Rose also has a son with a serious spinal issue that means he spends a lot of time in hospital.

“My son is also on experimental medication for his back and has to inject himself. It would be great if the hospitals could put all of his information up on a My Health Record to closely monitor his condition and in case of an emergency where he cannot communicate his needs because he is in too much pain.”

“My Health Record reduces the burden on carers and families in trying to keep up-to-date records. It has assisted hospital emergency departments in assessing patients' conditions. It has allowed patients to have more confidence in knowing that if their healthcare professional is not available, there will always be a readily available record following them,” says Dr Blom.

Dr Blom continued, “For emergency departments, this is a huge issue especially for out-of-hours presentations when it can be challenging to access records quickly. Indirectly, it saves costs to the health system by reducing investigations that have already been performed, and it can reduce medication errors which are a major cause of hospital presentations”.

As you control your own My Health Record, you will be able to see which health professionals have accessed it and you can also request for information you don't want on it, not to be uploaded or remove it altogether.

It's worth noting that under the law only healthcare providers involved in your care can access your My Health Record. To do this, they need to be registered with the My Health Record system; otherwise they're unable to access it. This may include health care providers such as your General Practitioner (GP), pharmacies, pathology labs, hospitals, specialists, and allied health professionals. You can also set up automatic notifications to receive an email or SMS alerts when a new healthcare organisation accesses your My Health Record for the first time, or in an emergency.

Every time your My Health Record is accessed, it's recorded in an audit log which you can view. The My Health Record cybersecurity team continually monitors system access, and there are strict penalties for any unlawful access.

Eric Dunn is the Digital Health Manager at the Sydney North Primary Health Network and says, “Basically a My Health Record is a secure online summary of a person's key health information. I personally use My Health Record for my own and my family's organ donor information, next of kin information, and my daughter's health history and medications. It's immediately accessible by my health providers when it's needed 24/7, it has a medicines summary of all our medicines over time, it can speak for me when I can't in an emergency health situation, and I can control who gets to see it.

“In my case, my nominated representative is my wife, and I have access to her My Health Record, and we both have access to our daughters My Health Record. I can hide (block) individual documents, and block any health organisation from accessing my health record. It gives the patient total control.”

You can also customise access to your My Health Record by setting access controls including restricting who can see your information, adding a PIN code to an individual document or the whole record so only health professionals you provide the code to can access it unless it's an emergency, or cancel your record, at any time.

The Federal Health Minister recently announced the plan to strengthen privacy provisions around the My Health Record, following feedback from general practice and the community. After constructive discussions with the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Australian Government will strengthen privacy provisions under the My Health Record Act, to match the existing Australian Digital Health Agency policy, which requires a court order to release any My Health Record information without consent. The amendment will ensure no record can be released to police or government agencies, for any purpose, without a court order. The legislation will also be revised to ensure that if someone wishes to cancel their record, they will be able to do so permanently, with their record deleted from the system.

**END**

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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To view the “Why leave my Health on Record?” videos click on links below:

[Rose O'Donnell My Health Record carer VIDEO](#)

[Dr Hans Blom My Health Record GP VIDEO](#)

[Eric Dunn My Health Record Digital Health Manager VIDEO](#)

## PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD (on your keyboard click Ctrl key and left hand 'mouse' click)

- [Rose O'Donnell & Her Mum 1](#)
- [Rose O'Donnell & Her Mum 2](#)
- [Rose O'Donnell 1](#)
- [Rose O'Donnell 2](#)
- [Rose O'Donnell 3](#)
- [Dr Hans Blom 1](#)
- [Dr Hans Blom 2](#)
- [Eric Dunn 1](#)
- [Eric Dunn 2](#)

## More Information

### Benefits of having a My Health Record?

**Better Access** - Your important healthcare information will be available in one place that is easily accessible by your authorised doctors, specialists or hospitals. Even if you move or travel interstate, the information can be viewed securely online. My Health Record is mobile enabled so you can access your health information from a computer, tablet or mobile device. You control who can see it. Once it's set up, you don't need to do anything.

**Strong Security** - There are strict rules and regulations on who can see or use your My Health Record to protect your health information from misuse or loss.

**Convenience** - You won't need to worry about having to remember and repeat your health history like medicines, details of chronic conditions, immunisations and the dates of recent tests with different or new healthcare providers. The same goes for your children's health history including immunisations and medical tests.

**Improved Safety** - In a medical emergency, health care providers connected to the My Health Record system can see your health information to provide you with the best possible care quickly. If you like, you can list any allergies, adverse reactions and medical conditions you may have to help healthcare providers give you better advice and treatment.

**Consent** - Under the *My Health Records Act 2012*, health care provider organisations are authorised to upload information to the My Health Record System, and view information in the system. Generally, this means that health care providers do not need to obtain consent before uploading information to a My Health Record when providing services to a healthcare consumer. However, consumers can request that a specific document is not uploaded to their record, and healthcare providers must comply with such requests. Also, consumers can restrict access to or remove information contained in their record.

Under the [My Health Records Act 2012](#), healthcare provider organisations are authorised to upload information to the My Health Record System. This means that subject to the situations described below, there is no requirement for a healthcare provider to obtain consent on each occasion prior to

uploading clinical information. There is also no requirement for a healthcare consumer to review clinical information prior to it being uploaded.

It may be considered good clinical practice for health care providers to advise you they will be uploading information to their My Health Record, particularly if this information might be considered sensitive. This approach is recommended by the Australian Medical Association in its [guide to using the My Health Record system](#).

**Privacy** – To create a My Health Record the Australian Digital Health Agency, who are the system operators, use information such as your name, date of birth and Medicare records. They collect this information from you, from Medicare and other government bodies. Only registered healthcare provider organisations such as general practices and hospitals will be able to access your My Health Record when providing healthcare to you. You can set access controls to restrict which healthcare provider organisations can see your My Health Record, or certain information and documents in it. The Australian Digital Health Agency DO NOT disclose your information to anyone else unless required and permitted by law. More information about this privacy policy can be found at [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/privacy](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/privacy).

For more information or if you decided you don't want a My Health Record go to [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au) or call **1800 723 471**