

Submission to the Department of Health on the draft National Digital Health Strategy

Australian Association of Practice Management Ltd

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Summary

AAPM has invited comment from our Directors, State Committee members and AAPM Ambassadors who are all Certified Practice Managers or Fellows with extensive experience in the field of managing healthcare practices.

They have commented that the paper appears comprehensive and clear in providing information on the National Digital Health Strategy.

AAPM continues to support the implementation of digital health initiatives to ultimately improve health care service delivery, coordination and collaboration across the healthcare continuum. Technology has the capacity to enhance the role of the health professional, and to reduce the administrative load so they can spend more time on patient care.

Our key concerns include

- These ultimate objectives must be sufficiently articulated and demonstrated to general practitioners in a way which will encourage their engagement.
- The roll-out of the NBN must be considered in determining digital health targets. Many areas across Australia do not have access to internet services which are adequate to support digital health strategies.
- There are a proportion of consumers who are not interested in managing their own health.
- All sectors of the health industry need to be able to access and use digital health solutions.
- Interoperable technology is critical to improving the utility of digital health solutions.

Key Concerns

1. Health system challenges and the need for digital health

Health inequalities particularly due to geographic location. Our members in rural and remote areas remain sceptical that they will be able to receive the benefits of digital health developments which rely upon the NBN. Vast areas of Australia, particularly rural areas, but also many metropolitan areas have inadequate internet access. In

developing targets for the health profession to use digital health solutions the NBN roll out schedule must be considered.

Changing consumer requirements

While AAPM members agree that Australians are increasingly becoming aware of their own health there remains a great many people, including those with chronic diseases, who expect their doctor to 'manage' their health and have minimal desire to do it themselves.

2. Person-centred care and Precision Medicine

AAPM agrees that the "User centred" design is the right approach to use. However in the experience of AAPM members, a significant proportion of the population will still expect their health practitioner to manage their health with no contribution from themselves.

3. Change and Adoption

AAPM members are concerned that the ultimate objectives to improve health care service delivery, coordination and collaboration across the healthcare continuum have not been articulated and demonstrated sufficiently to general practitioners in a way which will encourage their engagement. The ePIP initiatives alone will not be enough to engage the GPs. It must be clear that digital health solutions are going to deliver on proposed patient health care improvements.

There is significant concern that the uptake of systems will only be embraced when the changes in work processes are not impacting on the time available to provide patient care. There must be incentives for GPs to not only upload Shared Health Summaries but to keep them current.

4. Health service efficiencies

AAPM supports the development of digital health solutions which will improve the efficient management of health service delivery.

The utility of the MHR is severely limited by the current lack of uniformity in the digital health capacity of hospitals. Also most allied health providers don't have access to the MHR so can't access plans created by GPs or update them on the status of work they are doing with the patient. It is critical that the health record be made useful to all health service providers. Technology which is interoperable is critical to make this happen.

Further clarification may be sought from

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