

MEDIA RELEASE

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Electronic health records good for patients, but must be safe

Nurses believe a national shared electronic health record has the potential to be an important tool in improving health outcomes, but must be assured their patient's confidential medical information is secure and protected, the Australian College of Nursing said today.

"A national shared electronic health record means that as people move between health care providers – or even move between states – clinical professionals have a single trusted source of information, information that could be vital such as a person's allergies or medications, they can quickly and easily access," Australian College of Nursing (ACN) Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said.

"To ensure this resource is fully utilised, people must trust that their private information is safe. Patient confidentiality is a pillar of our health system and a tenet nurses are committed to maintaining. It cannot be compromised."

ACN is speaking out following last week's revelation that Medicare card details were available for sale on the darknet. Australian Federal Police as well as the Department of Human Services are investigating the possible breach. ACN looks forward to the findings of this investigation.

"The Australian College of Nursing supports moves towards a national opt-out approach to My Health Record and wants to ensure the vast majority of Australians take up this opportunity to improve their health care. Security concerns could play a factor in people choosing to wait to participate."

ACN welcomes the My Health Record access, security and privacy provisions currently in place, but calls on the Commonwealth Government to reassure the public, and those caring for them, that their information will be safe.

Adjunct Professor Ward said nurses must be involved in the development, implementation and ongoing maintenance of My Health Record.

"The majority of frontline health services in this country are delivered, at least in part, by nurse, so it is critical they have a real say in how our national electronic record is designed to make it as user-friendly as possible," she said.

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For interviews contact ACN Media Officer Executive Assistant Narelle Barrie on 02 6283 3459 or Kristen Connell on 0400 054 227.



Notes to Editors: The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva. An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

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