

**Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety**Chair: Senator Catryna Bilyk  
Deputy Chair: Mr Alex Hawke MP

## Keeping seniors' online health records safe

The security of personal online health records will be examined at the next public hearing for parliament's Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety inquiry into cyber-safety for seniors.

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) will express its concerns about Personally Controlled Electronic Health Records (PCEHR) at the hearing in Canberra on September 19.

Since July 2012, the online record system has allowed registered users to provide access to their medical records to others for secondary purposes.

In a submission to the inquiry, the national peak body for healthcare consumers said it had concerns about the adequacy of safeguards to prevent the misuse of PCEHR information by third parties, such as employers or insurers.

"Users could be coerced into permitting access to their record when this will not be in their best interests," the CHF said in its submission. "Older Australians, particularly those who lack computer and online health literacy skills, may be particularly vulnerable."

The CHF has made several recommendations to the committee, including the need to examine the system's complaints mechanisms and review Medicare Australia's role as the complaints body.

Committee chair, Senator Catryna Bilyk, said the committee was looking forward to hearing more about the CHF's concerns and recommendations to secure the safety of seniors' online health records.

She also encouraged older Australians to participate in a survey about seniors' internet usage.

"The public survey has attracted significant interest already, and is still open," Senator Bilyk said. "I encourage senior Australians to complete the survey, either online or in hardcopy."

The survey takes about ten minutes and is anonymous. Paper copies can be posted or faxed to the committee. It can be accessed at <https://www.surveymk.com/s/cybersafety-seniors>.

The committee's public hearing on **Wednesday, 19 September 2012** will commence at **4.30pm** in **Committee Room 1R5, Parliament House, Canberra**.

Audio of proceedings in Committee Room 1R5 will be webcast on [http://www.aph.gov.au/News\\_and\\_Events/Watch\\_Parliament](http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament)

Further information on the inquiry is available from the committee's web site <http://www.aph.gov.au/jsc>

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