

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-2011, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-073

OUTCOME 10: Health Systems Capacity and Quality

Topic: eHEALTH

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

Can the Department provide the evidence that supports the approach being adopted with the PCEHR as opposed to other approaches to eHealth?

Answer:

The proposed approach for Australia's national personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR) system has considered the lessons available from early regional scale implementations and larger scale international systems to develop a model specifically targeted to Australia's healthcare context.

The PCEHR system takes a combined approach to interoperability - one which is tailored to support the Australian federated, multi-layered, public and private health system.

Australia's approach is based on leveraging existing systems and distributed sources of health information as a basis for populating a consolidated view of an individual's health information. It is built on the National eHealth Strategy principles, the foundations for information exchange currently being developed through National eHealth Transition Authority and the introduction of the healthcare identifier service.

This is consistent with international experience where an evolutionary rather than a 'big-bang' approach is being found to be more effective in lowering risks and costs and increasing uptake by consumers and providers.^{1,2} In contrast, the same analysis has shown that approaches relying on localised organic growth, can lead to limitations on the information that can be captured and shared for the benefit of broader health outcomes.

The national PCEHR system will comprise a secure network of systems that will provide access to consolidated and summarised health information drawn from multiple source systems for individuals who choose to participate.

1 Coiera, E. Building a national IT system from the middle out. *J Am Med Inform Assoc.* 2009;16:271-273.

2 Devlies J, De Moor G, De Clercq E, Vandenbeghe A. Health Data Exchange, Health Data Sharing and Decentralised Clinical Data Collections - Recommendations from a Belgian Expert Group. In: De Clercq E, De Moor G, Bellon J, Foulon M, Van Der Lei J, editors. *Collaborative Patient Centred E-Health.* Amsterdam: IOS Press; 2008.