



frequently asked questions on eMR

health *eLink*
Electronic Medical Record

NSW HEALTH

What is eMR?

The Electronic Medical Record (eMR) is a system that manages clinical information for patient care and treatment via a computer. It replaces many of the paper forms existing in the paper medical record and makes the information available in a secure way to clinicians from any location in the hospital. The eMR captures patient information and clinical details as part of their journey through the health system – from arrival to discharge - via information generated by clinicians, including doctors, nursing and allied health professionals.

Who is responsible for implementing eMR?

The eMR is a major NSW Health initiative. NSW Area Health Services will implement the eMR in conjunction with Health Technology and Cerner Corporation, a global healthcare information technology provider.

How will eMR help?

The eMR will enable clinicians to:

- > Record patient care where and when it is delivered
- > Review progress and order treatment or tests from any location where there is a computer
- > Continually review results and outcomes as well as modify care as required
- > Make use of decision support at the time of ordering and on review of clinical outcomes, including allergies and alerts
- > Leverage information in the eMR and existing systems like radiology and pathology, to efficiently generate discharge summaries and referrals
- > Access patient and clinical information at any authorised workstation

Who will use eMR?

The eMR will be used by all clinicians who care for patients and clerical, administrative and management staff involved in ancillary patient care processes. This includes:

- > Doctors
- > Nurses
- > Allied health professionals
- > Scientific and technical staff
- > Health information managers
- > Administrative staff, including ward clerks and admissions personnel

The eMR will be accessible in all hospital locations where patient care decisions are made. This includes:

- > Inpatient wards
- > Outpatient clinics
- > Specialist rooms
- > Specialty departments such as operating theatres and emergency

What will the eMR deliver?

Electronic Results:

will allow test results and reports from diagnostic services to be viewed at the clinical workstation. Examples include radiology reports and laboratory results.

Electronic Orders:

enables clinicians to order tests, procedures and services online. Examples include pathology, medical imaging, allied health and dietary orders.

Electronic Discharge Referral System:

provides a summary of the patient's care, which can be transmitted electronically to providers like General Practitioners to support ongoing care in the community.

Emergency Department System:

information specific to emergency care to allow the efficient management of the department and patients. It includes triage information, presenting problems, treatment times, interventions, and more.

Operating Theatre System:

a system to manage the coordination of patients, surgeons, anaesthetists, equipment and rooms, and report on utilisation.

Enterprise Scheduling:

A system to coordinate scheduling of resources across an integrated set of information systems in a single view. Resources include patients, providers, locations and equipment.

For more information:

<http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/sim/emr>

What are the benefits of eMR?

The implementation of the eMR can provide significant benefits to health services, staff and the patients they treat. Some of these benefits include:

- > Reduced duplication of data entry
- > Online access to the patient record anywhere in the hospital
- > Improved security of patient information via system authorisation and auditing
- > More efficient clinical ordering practices through order sets and real-time transmission to receiving departments
- > Safer clinical ordering via decision support and embedded best practice
- > Improved communication between clinicians, departments and the community
- > Cost savings by reducing duplicate tests
- > Provides a wealth of information for clinical management and hospital operational support

What is the State Base Build?

The eMR will be implemented across New South Wales using a State Base Build (SBB) approach. The SBB ensures that implementations adopt agreed content and approaches to the clinical information to be gathered in the eMR. Workshops will be conducted with clinical representatives from each Area Health Service to contribute to the content. A clinical advisory group has

been established to oversee this work and approve the release. This approach provides a 'starter pack' of content to accelerate implementation. Each Area Health Service will build on this 'starter pack' to tailor the eMR to local needs. However, the SBB will ensure that the core components of an eMR are consistent across hospitals and Area Health Services as clinicians move between hospitals or access records from another AHS.

What type of support is available for Area Health Services on eMR?

Each Area Health Service will have front line super-user support implemented during the project. Once the system is operational, support services will be available by contacting Health Technology.

What happens if the eMR system crashes?

The servers hosting the eMR are 'highly available'. This means that all files/records on the eMR system are mirrored in real-time to a separate server. As such, a server can crash and the eMR remains useable, and information is not lost. In addition, a computer on each ward will save basic eMR information so that it remains accessible if the network is unavailable.

Is there a timeline for the implementation of eMR for each of the Area Health Services?

The implementation of the eMR throughout New South Wales is expected to be completed by June 2009.

Each Area will be implementing a comprehensive communication plan and keeping staff informed of progress and what they need to do.

Are consumers aware of the eMR?

A comprehensive information campaign is being undertaken to ensure that consumers are aware of the eMR and the benefits its implementation will bring to health services across the State.

Can a patient opt out from having his/her medical history on the eMR system?

No. The eMR replaces a significant amount of the existing paper medical record. The information is vital to patient care and is a mandatory part of the record.

What types of provisions are in place regarding preserving patient privacy?

The protection of personal information privacy through security measures are priority considerations. The eMR system has password protection for clinicians and all other users of the system. Through a system of permissions and privileges, the amount of information and functions

available to a user can be restricted. It also has an 'audit trail' mechanism allowing monitoring of appropriate clinician access to patient records. Information is held locally by each Area Health Service.

Does a consumer/patient have online access to their records?

Patients do not have routine or regular access to their medical records. However, under the Freedom of Information Act, an individual can request permission to view their records.

Have similar systems been adopted overseas?

Countries such as the United States, Singapore, Canada and the United Kingdom have adopted similar clinical information systems. International studies highlight the improved delivery and quality of outcomes achieved through eMR systems.

Are there any statistics available on the benefits of the eMR to clinicians?

The eMR provides enhanced capability throughout the hospital. Benefits will be achieved at the departmental, clinical and patient levels. Baseline measure will be taken prior to implementation and measured against results after the systems have been implemented.

For more information:

<http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/sim/emr>