

## Moving My Health Record forward

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The release of the report from the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's inquiry into the My Health Record system highlights again that consumer knowledge, trust and confidence is essential for My Health Record (MHR) to move forward.

The potential benefits remain and much of the policy to date is sound. Trust and confidence can be improved through consideration of the recommendations of the report and further legislative amendments to reflect key recommendations.

The CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said she expects the Government to work collaboratively to pass legislation before the opt-out period ends. There has been enormous public investment in getting MHR to this point, and CHF would welcome bipartisanship around additional amendments that further strengthen the policy intent and protections.

Policy and implementation need to align before any records are created. To meet the intent of legislative amendments to address privacy concerns, it is CHF's view that these must be passed before the end of the mid November opt-out period, and that ideally no records should be created following the opt-out period until the implementation of those amendments is complete.

"It is heartening to see much of the advice submitted to the inquiry by CHF included in the report. Realising the potential of MHR requires the Australian people to have confidence that their health information is used for their benefit, with their consent."

"CHF welcomes the Report's recommendations to provide more legislative clarity around the secondary uses of MHR data, and further education and communication campaigns to improve understanding and use of MHR.

"The 'digital divide' is real and, as the Committee has said, it is important that additional effort is made to identify, engage and provide targeted support to vulnerable groups to ensure they can make an informed choice about opt-out and, if they stay in, know how to adjust their controls."

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## Consumers shaping health



“Consumer access to their own health records through MHR is a key step in the shift from health consumers as passive patients, to consumers as active partners in their own care.

“Further communication and education should continue to include benefits and assurances about safeguards and risk mitigation strategies, but most importantly, must now begin to include more information about how to use MHR, both in terms of how to manage its access controls, and how to use it as a tool to improve health.

“Many Australians are already finding the system beneficial in their circumstances. Providing avenues for better understanding and use of MHR is the essential next step in its ongoing development,” Ms Wells said.

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