

FACT SHEET

REFORMING THE PUBLIC HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN

Background

NEHTA is a not-for-profit company established by the Australian, State and Territory governments to develop better ways of electronically collecting and securely exchanging health information.

Electronic health information (or e-health) systems that can securely and effectively exchange data can significantly improve how clinical and administrative information is communicated between healthcare providers. As a result, e-health systems have the potential to unlock substantially greater quality, safety and efficiency benefits in the healthcare sector.

One area of potentially significant efficiency gains lies in the public health supply chain. The healthcare sector is under considerable cost pressure to meet current and future demands for services, and reforming the supply chain offers the potential for substantial savings.

National Product Catalogue

NEHTA has developed and is now implementing a National Product Catalogue (NPC). The NPC will allow public health institutions in all States and Territories to obtain essential information about the medicines, medical devices and healthcare products they use, from one electronic source. The NPC will also hold information about non-medical products, such as office supplies and food items, therefore becoming *the* source of purchasing information in the public health system.

This provides a cost effective way of maintaining current and accurate supply information. With the NPC, the number of products incorrectly ordered because of identification errors, potentially delaying the treatment of a patient, will reduce significantly.

E-procurement & business intelligence

NEHTA is also investigating developing a standardised e-procurement hub for the public health sector. This will standardise and simplify purchasers' processes, and provide all Australian health departments with a minimum e-procurement capability.

In addition, NEHTA is creating business intelligence tools to improve public health sector procurement analysis and reporting. The capture of information via electronic means will provide for a better understanding of, for example

spending at an item level, in general and across purchasing areas.

NEHTA's approach to developing the specifications for the above tools will build on structures and processes already operating in health jurisdictions. It will be based on learning from jurisdictions, industry, international equivalent organisations, and appropriate local and international standards.

Relationship to other NEHTA initiatives

NEHTA currently has a number of initiatives underway to deliver secure, interoperable e-health systems, some of which are relevant to the work being undertaken in the Supply Chain area. This work includes:

- Standardising the terms and names used to describe medicines and other clinical information, such as diagnoses, procedures and therapies, in e-health systems;
- Establishing an overall framework for interoperable e-health systems;
- Developing unique identifiers for individuals and healthcare providers as well as medicines and medical products;
- Standardising the types and formats of health information to be collected in e-health systems;
- Identifying a secure means of electronically transferring clinical information between authorised healthcare professionals;
- Designing specifications for secure electronic health records; and
- Involving local and international standards organisations to support e-health implementation.

For further information go to www.nehta.gov.au

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