



Executive Summary

Discharge Summary Release 1.0

Introduction

As part of the emerging e-health infrastructure currently taking shape across Australia, this package release – like others being developed by NEHTA – was based around several key design requirements.

Being founded upon stakeholder consultation, this release gathers up-to-date intelligence and expertise from participating clinical, administrative and analytical communities.

As part of an incremental release schedule, it provides infrastructure partners with testable specifications and methods, offering immediate clinical advantages for patients and healthcare professionals, while also providing a basis for improved coverage and sophistication into the future.

This release recognises the need to consult extensively with the wider national health community in order to develop solutions that deliver both immediate and longer-term benefits to health care providers and their patients. Requirements associated with security and privacy are also acknowledged, ensuring that information coding and exchange is conducted appropriately.

In short, this package delivers a foundational part of the discharge summary national framework, validated through stakeholder participation, and balances specific interests with the need for national consensus towards a sustainable healthcare future.

Purpose

This package is intended to initiate and foster the ongoing development of a series of national specifications and methods to support the structured exchange of discharge summary information between clinicians.

Structure

The Discharge Summary Release 1.0 package is built upon a series of interlocking national infrastructure services, developed by NEHTA's e-Health Foundations program, specifically designed to support the appropriate exchange of clinical and administrative information between participating healthcare providers.

The relevant e-Health Foundations include the Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI), the Healthcare Provider Identifier (HPI), the National Authentication Service for Health (NASH) and Secure Messaging (SM). These foundation services are at varying stages of readiness, and it is therefore acknowledged that local or interim infrastructure services will need to be commissioned in order to support the initial transfer of information. NEHTA's e-Discharge Summaries are part of NEHTA's 'e-Communications in Practice', also including e-Medication Management, e-Pathology and e-Referral.

Approach

As several jurisdictions and health care providers are currently working toward state-based discharge summary systems, a repeatable implementation strategy

has been adopted to allow for the iterative uptake of NEHTA specifications over time.

Accordingly, the approach adopted in this release is both consultative and incremental; in this way, participating stakeholders are able to shape the development of the national discharge summary standard and its implementation within their specific clinical context. Consequently, participants will be better able to ensure that discharge-related change is enabling and meaningful.

Benefits

The discharge summary package provides two main benefits, both intended to scale with adoption rates.

The first is error-reduction, particularly in the encoding and transfer of clinical data. More accurate clinical records are promoted by streamlined work practices and the option of appropriate types of automation to support data gathering and exchange. Improvements in the timely delivery of clinical information also help to promote error reduction, and allow new efficiencies and synergies.

The second is the reduction of readmission rates for patients experiencing adverse events, particularly those caused by delays in the exchange of relevant patient information. Related issues include adverse reactions to medications and allergic responses, among others.

In combination, these benefits promote the meaningful and enabling integration of disparate medical data at the clinician's desktop, providing support for the reliable exchange of information, reductions in avoidable readmissions, as well as improved opportunities for appropriate therapies and interventions.

Content

The release is composed of two introductory and three key documents:

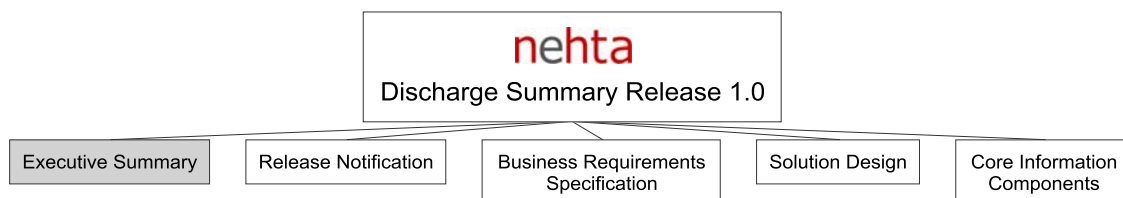


Figure 1 Discharge Summary Package Document Map

The Business Requirements Specification describes the high level requirements for the creation, delivery and receipt of discharge summaries for admitted patients from hospitals or clinics to general practitioners.

Additionally, the Solution Design defines national guidelines and specifications that implementers should adopt when developing discharge solutions in order to allow future interoperability.

Finally, the Core Information Components document defines the information components being recommended for use when exchanging discharge summaries within Australia.

Feedback

Feedback on this release is requested before September 30th 2009 and can be emailed to dischargesummary@nehta.gov.au as can any questions relating to this package. Priority areas for feedback include errors of omission or commission, inconsistent descriptions and editorial rule concerns.