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*The Peak Body Representing Allied Health in Australia
Incorporating AHPARR (Rural & Remote)*

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ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS NEED INCENTIVES FOR eHEALTH RECORDS FOR CONSUMERS TO BENEFIT

The benefits to consumers of the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) program will be severely limited unless allied health professionals receive incentive payments to enable them to participate in the program, according to Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), the peak national body for allied health professions.

AHPA President, Vittorio Cintio, said that most Australians see an allied health professional for treatment at some stage and these health professionals need to be able to participate in the PCEHR program to ensure consumers receive the maximum benefit of their healthcare team members working together.

“Consumers who wish to participate in the program would expect their key health care providers to be able to access their records. This represents a large investment in terms of time on the part of allied health professionals,” Mr. Cintio said. “If the Government cannot provide sufficient incentives to enable them to participate, the PCEHR program will be severely limited.”

Mr. Cintio said that the overall objective of the ehealth legislation was commendable, giving consumers more control over their health information and allowing healthcare providers quicker and some shared access to patient records. However, lack of ehealth support for allied health professionals to be able to participate in the system continues to be overlooked.

“The Federal Government already provides general practices with crucial incentives to assist them to set up necessary electronic systems and enable them to participate in such initiatives. However, these incentives are not available to allied health professionals. This means that many of them must meet these costs associated with this important ehealth initiative, in order to contribute to the overall health outcomes of consumers.” Mr. Cintio said. “Until the Federal Government provides allied health professionals with the same incentives as they provide to general practitioners, most consumers will fail to receive the maximum benefits from the PCEHR program.”

Mr. Cintio said that allied health professionals are vital members of the multidisciplinary team, particularly for people suffering the chronic health conditions such as diabetes.

“Allied health professionals comprise 20% of Australia’s health workforce – far more than doctors. It is inconceivable that the Federal Government continues to overlook these highly trained and valuable people, particularly in a time when we have an ageing population with a rapidly increasing incidence of chronic disease, often requiring healthcare services from a range of allied health professions” Mr. Cintio said. “The

Members: Audiological Society of Australia, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Institute of Radiography, Australian Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, Australian Osteopathic Association, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Sonographers Association, Chiropractors’ Association of Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Occupational Therapy Australia, Orthoptics Australia, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia.

Associates: Australian Diabetes Educators Association.

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Government needs to recognise this and understand that allied health professionals too are at the core of a strong healthcare system.”

Mr. Cintio said that AHPA, the peak national body for allied health professions, would continue to call on the Government to provide comparable incentives to allied health to allow them to provide appropriate healthcare to the highest standards.

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