

My health record

The [‘My health record’](#) is an online summary of your clients’ personal health information. The record will include things like prescriptions dispensed, test or scan results, immunisations and medical conditions and treatment. However, clinical notes by GPs will not be added.

The record will include up to two years of Medicare data and only those tests and scans that take place after the record has been created will be added. It is important to note that clients can choose what information they share. Clients may add emergency contact details, current medications, allergy information, Indigenous status and more. They can choose to exclude certain information like prescriptions issued by a GP or specialist, for example.

What is the benefit of ‘My health record’?

The ‘My health record’ will allow medical professionals full access to clients’ health information. This information may benefit clients by improving their care and support greater co-ordination of care. It may reduce duplication of tests and facilitate better information sharing between GPs and the hospital system.

What are the risks of ‘My health record’?

Once a ‘My health record’ has been created, only registered health care providers and the client can access the electronic health care record. It may be available for some government agencies to access under the legislation, but formal requests to the [Australian Digital Health Agency](#) will have to be made and assessed before data can be released. The information can also be disclosed for law enforcement purposes under the legislation, but only in extraordinary circumstances. In terms of mitigating risk, people can access their record and change the privacy and security controls to:

- set a record access code to give access only to selected healthcare providers
- control access to specific documents to limit who can view them
- give access to a nominated representative such as a family member, close friend, advocate or carer.

What are the risks for people who use drugs or who have had a notifiable disease, for example?

A range of registered health care professionals will be able to access clients’ health information including prescriptions and pathology results. Many people who use drugs experience high levels of stigma once the history of drug use, treatment for issues related to drug use or exposure to HIV or hepatitis C is known. There is the potential for the ‘My health record’ to make this kind of health status/drug use information more accessible to a broad range of health care providers including dentists, pharmacists and hospitals. There is a valid concern among some drug users that this access may increase the likelihood of facing discrimination and stigmatisation in the health care system.

What should NGO AOD treatment agencies know in relation to this?

NADA recommends that staff of NGO AOD treatment agencies make themselves aware of the details of the electronic health record by contacting the [Australian Digital Health Agency](#) or call 1800 723 471. All clients should be informed about ‘My health record’ and their rights to opt out or to make changes to the privacy and security controls.

How do people opt out?

A three-month window has been provided to allow people to opt out, which ends on **15 October 2018**. Thereafter, clients can only register for updates on opting out. [Learn how to opt out](#), so you can support your clients to do this if they so choose.

For more information

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