



## PRESS RELEASE

### Smart Health and Partners take Chronic Disease into Australia's first statewide shared Electronic Health Record (EHR) program.

The Department of Health and Ageing has awarded a significant grant to promote the use of electronic health records in managing chronic illness.

Work has begun on the implementation of Australia's first statewide, cross-practice integrated clinical EHR program for the management of chronic disease. Professor John Wilson, Head of The Alfred Hospital's Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Service, has brought together Victoria's CF services, Cystic Fibrosis Victoria, the Victorian Partnership for Advanced Computing and the Victorian Rural Physicians Network (operating under the auspices of the RACP) to champion the network. Smart Health has been selected as the technology provider.

This program will fulfil a shared EHR vision for Alfred patients that was first initiated through a grant to The Alfred CF Service from Telstra five years ago. CF is the most common life threatening, recessive genetic condition affecting Australians. Those suffering CF may need to attend clinics four or more times a year as well as requiring periodic hospital treatment. In hospital, patients are treated by multi-disciplinary teams of physicians, nurses and allied health staff. Between hospital visits, they rely on local GPs and regionally based hospital physicians across Victoria for emergency and supportive care.

Smart Health first implemented its on-line EHR program at The Alfred in 2003. It was the first online shared, clinical EHR implementation in Australia that specifically supported chronic disease management. The application, in addition to its core shared EHR capability, implements a full clinical dataset for CF as well as for other chronic diseases. The Victorian CF program is expected to expand to other chronic diseases.

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The on-line clinical information management application will begin immediate deployment at metropolitan CF Services, followed by selected regional hospitals. The medical records of CF patients that opt into the program will be available, on demand, to authorised clinicians across the participating centres, reducing the risk of misadventure, improving patient safety, enhancing care quality and supporting clinician efficiency. For example, Dr Rob Ziffer in Sale will be able to view, on demand, a patient's latest medication details, lung function data and treatment plan that may have been updated by Professor Wilson just the previous day.

Professor Wilson said, "Patient care will be improved enormously with better access to information and communication between carers. We began with a small project at the Alfred and are now embarking on a program to establish a benchmark for the management of chronic disease. We will be able to evolve this network to support CF patients across the country as well as supporting other, related conditions. This grant will provide an opportunity to implement a strategy supporting the objectives of healthcare administrators, medical colleges and community groups."

State and Commonwealth health departments will also benefit from this program, as will national research programs. Smart Health's Cystic Fibrosis management program provides a direct data feed to the national Australian CF Association database and will implement additional data reporting to support genetic profiling through the aggregation of clinical data. Automated reporting will save Victorian Cystic Fibrosis clinics over 500 hours of nurse and administration time per year that could be spent on quality improvement activities.

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For more information about this program, contact:

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