



Smart Health
SOLUTIONS

PRESS RELEASE DECEMBER 2004

NEW MEDICARE SMART CARDS

NEW MEDICARE SMARTCARDS & HEALTHCONNECT GET UNDERWAY IN TASMANIA.

Australians will have access to a new Medicare smartcard as part of the government's electronic health agenda to improve the quality and accessibility of patient information across the health system.

A national roll out of Medicare smart cards will begin in Tasmania next month. During July, registration for the new Medicare smartcard service will commence on an opt-in basis in Tasmania.

To begin, the new Medicare smartcard will store emergency patient information including allergies and adverse drug reactions. An option for the storage of a digital photo will also ensure enhanced patient identification in an emergency situation.

And from 1 January 2005 Tasmanians will also be able to use their Medicare smartcard to access additional information including their child immunisation records, Medicare Safety Net status and PBS expenditure at Medicare offices using a username and password.

The Medicare smartcard is a key component of HealthConnect, the electronic health information network. The Australian Government provided \$128 million for the national roll-out of HealthConnect in the recent May Budget. The government also announced in the Budget that it would introduce a new Medicare smartcard to be introduced as part of HealthConnect.

HealthConnect involves the exchange of patient health information via a secure network and within strict privacy safeguards. With the patient's consent, information collected at the point of care (for example, at a hospital or GP clinic) will be able to be

accessed by providers through HealthConnect when required.

The new Medicare smartcard and HealthConnect will enable patients and health care providers to securely share health information across a range of health services, improving the safety and quality of Australia's health system.

New Medicare smartcards will be available initially in Tasmania to coincide with the expansion of HealthConnect, which the government announced in March this year. The rollout in Tasmania will be the first stage of a national introduction of new Medicare smartcards.

Press Release from Department of Health & Ageing

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