

Connected Care Project

Delivering better healthcare in SA with real-time data sharing between primary care and hospitals

The Vision

".....to provide real-time transfer of healthcare information between primary and hospital care providers that is readily accessible at point of care to assist healthcare decision making, track the patient journey across the system, support coordination of care, and ultimately improve services..."¹

Key Partners

Critical leadership has been provided by the following organisations

- SA Health's Office of the Chief Medical Information Officer and Digital Health SA
- Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health
- University of South Australia
- Adelaide Primary Health Network
- Country SA Primary Health Network
- Health Translation SA (HTSA)

Work to date has been funded by HTSA and the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund as part of the Rapid Applied Research Translation program. (MRF9100005).

Background

In 2019, HTSA initiated a project to consider how SA's rich supply of data could be better used to improve continuity of care between primary health care and the acute hospital system. The resulting "Connected Care" vision to establish a statewide health information exchange was determined through extensive consultation with primary care clinicians, hospital clinicians, consumers and health service providers.

A Consensus Workshop was held in March 2023 where delegates considered how a health information exchange could deliver the vision for the project and what now needs to happen to progress. The delegates agreed:

- That SA should commence the process of implementing a health information exchange mechanism between primary care and acute hospital settings to improve continuity of care, safety and system efficiency.
- That a pilot be investigated with a geographical focus involving a Local Health Network and a group of general practices with both rural and metropolitan focus. This pilot should explore how exchange of key data items such as medications, allergy alerts, diagnostic reports and basic medical history can improve patient care, patient experience, safety, clinician experience and system efficiency.
- That a governance and leadership model be put in place that involves key stakeholders from the outset of the pilot through to delivery of a production solution.
- That Health Translation SA, via the Connected Care Steering Committee, continue to progress project governance until such time as details of a pilot can be determined.

Pilot to Production

Production HTSA, Digital Health SA, and the Adelaide PHN are working together to progress the agreed actions. These include:

- Aligning with the Australian Digital Health Agency
- Reviewing SA's enabling legislation
- Establishing a leadership/governance model
- Exploring funding options, and
- Identifying implementation partners.

The Connected Care project will

- a) develop a proof of concept for a health information exchange between primary care and hospitals,
- b) progress this to a statewide production system that would allow full access between hospital and general practice clinical records, in near real-time.

Commonwealth & State Policy

A South Australian health information exchange envisages additional functions to the current My Health Record (MHR). The Federal Budget for 23/24 outlined additional funding for MHR including considering health information exchange. HTSA will fully explore these opportunities in the first instance.

Value Proposition

By providing a real-time data exchange between hospitals and primary care we will improve patient care, maximise safety and quality and enhance health service efficiency. E.g.

- Reduce adverse patient outcomes (medication, allergies)
- Reduce testing duplication (imaging, pathology)
- Improve patient flow (enabling virtual care and care planning in non hospital settings).^{2,3}

South Australia, with its single electronic medical record now rolling out to country locations, is ideally placed to benefit from joining data between sectors.

Funding

The Connected Care Committee will be seeking \$8-10M over five years from partner organisations to deliver a proof of concept and production ready health information exchange for South Australia.

References

1. HTSA (2020) <https://healthtranslationsa.org.au/our-work/platforms/primary-acute-care-interface-data-project>
2. Nahm, E; Schoenbaum, A; Behm, C; Rowen, L; (2020). Health Information Exchange: Practical Overview and Implications for Nursing Practice The Journal of nursing administration. Vol.50 (11)
3. Sarkar, IN (2022) Transforming Health Data to Actionable Information: Recent Progress and Future Opportunities in Health Information Exchange, IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics 31(1)

Version 0.2 May 2023

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Roadmap

From Pilot to Production

The following roadmap outlines the key steps toward delivering a South Australian, state-wide health information exchange. The initial pilots will focus on providing near real-time, mutual access to medical records between public hospitals & general practice. Funding will be secured and governance established.

Commercial partners will be selected to run a series of pilots which will be evaluated and a production solution selected. A phased implementation approach will be followed and include evaluation to inform benefits for consumers, staff and health systems.

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(HTSA, 2020)

