Frequently asked questions: individuals

All information in this document is correct as of November 2012.
General FAQs

What is a personally controlled electronic health (eHealth) record?
An eHealth record is an electronic summary of your health records. You and healthcare professionals who are authorised by participating healthcare organisations can access it online whenever you need, from wherever you are.

The Australian Government is rolling out an eHealth record system and people seeking health care in Australia can now register for an eHealth record. This is the first step in the development of the eHealth record system, which will be built up in carefully managed stages.

Healthcare organisations can now also register for the eHealth record system, and authorise healthcare professionals to access the eHealth record system.

As the system develops over time, having an eHealth record will give your doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals involved in your care access to a summary of your key health information, provided you have given initial consent when you set up the access settings for your eHealth record. This will include information such as medications, test results, hospital discharge summaries, allergies and immunisations.

As people and healthcare organisations register for the eHealth record system, your health care will become better connected which will result in better, faster and more efficient care for you.

Why should I get an eHealth record?
Having an eHealth record can make getting the right treatment faster, safer and easier.
- Faster, because doctors and nurses and other healthcare professionals will not have to spend time searching for past treatment information.
- Safer, because authorised healthcare professionals can view your important health care information, including any allergies and vaccinations and the treatment you have received.
- Easier, because you will not have to remember the results of tests you have had, or all the medications you have been prescribed.

How is it different to what I have now?
At the moment, all your health care information is stored in different files – for example, some at the GP clinic, the pharmacy, the physiotherapist’s, or the hospital. It might be stored on computers but they are not connected, so it is not easy to share information. With your approval, an eHealth record will, over time, allow your information to be shared online quickly and easily by the healthcare organisations looking after you. This means that even if you are travelling interstate, you will still have access to your record should you need it.

Do I have to have an eHealth record?
eHealth records are personally controlled and it is up to you if you wish to have one or not. If you choose not to have an eHealth record, you will still have the same access to the health system as you currently do.

Why is it better than what I have now?
Until now, your medical records have been stored in different locations by different healthcare professionals. With an eHealth record, you can access an online summary of your information wherever you have access to the internet.

Your eHealth record has strong security and privacy safeguards – you will have a user ID and password to access your record. You can also see who has accessed or updated your eHealth record. If you feel someone has inappropriately accessed your eHealth record you can contact the helpline by calling 1800 723 471.
Will an eHealth record replace my existing records at my GP’s clinic?
Your eHealth record will not replace your existing records but when you see a doctor, get a new prescription or visit a specialist, information can be added to your eHealth record. Over time, this will build up an overview of your health, which will help you and your doctors take even better care of you.

Your doctor will continue to take and review notes when you have a consultation, and this detailed information will sit within local clinical information systems, as per current practice.

Who can get an eHealth record?
People seeking health care in Australia can register for an eHealth record.

When can I get an eHealth record?
You can register for an eHealth record now.

How do I get an eHealth record?
You can register for an eHealth record in one of the following ways:
•   Online – by visiting www.ehealth.gov.au
•   Over the phone – by calling 1800 723 471 and selecting option one
•   In person – by visiting a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services
•   In writing – by completing a registration application form, available from a service centre offering Medicare services or from www.ehealth.gov.au, and posting it to: Personally Controlled eHealth Record Program, GPO Box 9942, In your Capital City.

What will be on my eHealth record?
When you first log on to your eHealth record, it will contain basic information, and you can add your own notes, including emergency contact details, any allergies you have or medication you are taking, Indigenous status, as well as information about the custodian of your advance care directive (‘living will’) if you have one.

When you set up your record, you will be able to choose whether you want information about your health that is already included on your Medicare records to be added to your eHealth record. This can include immunisation records (for children up to the age of seven), Medicare and pharmaceutical benefits information, and organ donation details.

As the system develops, more of your health care information can be added by the doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals involved in your care, including any treatment you may receive or medication you are prescribed. Your eHealth record will build up over time. You will be able use www.ehealth.gov.au, after you have registered, to access your eHealth record.

What information will be included in my eHealth record?
When you first access your eHealth record, you can enter basic information about your own health, such as details of allergies and medications you are taking. You can also keep private notes for your own use, such as how you are feeling or reactions to medications, which cannot be viewed by your doctor or nurse.

As healthcare organisations upgrade their clinical software so that it can communicate with the eHealth record system, more information, including specialist and referral letters, can be added by your doctors, nurses and other authorised healthcare professionals involved in your care. This will allow your doctor to enter information about your consultations and treatment. This information could include family medical history that individuals have provided to a healthcare provider.
What is a shared health summary?
A shared health summary is an overview of your health care status at a particular point in time, developed by your ‘nominated provider’ – usually your GP. This is particularly useful if you have complex health needs or receive care from different doctors and other healthcare professionals. The shared health summary is helpful for new doctors or other healthcare professionals you may see, as it provides a clinically relevant overview of your health, and means that you will not need to remember or repeat details of all previous medications, important test results and other treatment you may have received.

Who is my ‘nominated provider’?
Your nominated provider is the individual healthcare professional who agrees with you to develop and manage your shared health summary. For most people, the nominated provider is likely to be your GP – this is because your GP is usually the person most involved in your ongoing, coordinated care.

Your nominated provider is decided by mutual agreement; if you wish to change nominated providers you can agree this with another doctor or authorised healthcare professional. You do not need to have a nominated provider in order to have an eHealth record.

Will my doctors see my MBS and PBS details, if I choose to have them on my eHealth record?
When you set up your record, you can choose to have information that Medicare already holds about you – including immunisation records (for children up to the age of seven under the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register), Medicare and pharmaceutical benefits information, and organ donation details. If you choose to include this, any doctors or healthcare professionals authorised by participating healthcare organisations will be able to see these details.

For people between the ages of 14 and 18 who have not taken control of their eHealth record, MBS and PBS details will not be accessible through their eHealth record. This is in line with existing Medicare policy to keep this information private from parents or others without the express consent of the young person.

Can I access my eHealth record on my smart phone or tablet? Can I register for an eHealth record on my smartphone or tablet?
You will be able to apply for and view your own eHealth record on a device of your choosing, as long as it has internet access, however, specific ‘applications’ are not being provided for mobile devices such as iPads, tablets and smart phones.

In an emergency, will doctors be able to access my eHealth record, even if I have used the privacy settings?
Healthcare organisations participating in the eHealth record system may access your eHealth record in an emergency, where it is not possible for you to give your consent. This is consistent with existing privacy laws.

In life-threatening cases where it is unreasonable or impractical to obtain consent to access your eHealth record, authorised healthcare professionals at participating healthcare organisations may assert emergency access. This will override any access controls that have been set and provide the healthcare organisation with unrestricted access to your eHealth record for five days. Use of the emergency access function will be logged in the audit log and you may be notified, if you request notifications.

Asserting emergency access is warranted where a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional believes that access to the information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to:

- your life, health or safety and your consent cannot be obtained (e.g. if you are unconscious); or
- public health or public safety.
What happens if I forget or lose my user ID or password?
To register for, or access your eHealth record online for the first time, you need an account with www.australia.gov.au. The delivery of Australian Government online services is coordinated through www.australia.gov.au, including the eHealth record system. Once you have a www.australia.gov.au account, use your user ID to access the eHealth record system.

If you lose or forget your www.australia.gov.au user details, you will need to create a new account by providing proof of identity online. Once this new account has been set up, you can re-link any program accounts (your eHealth record, Centrelink, Medicare or Child Support) that you had previously set up.

If you forget your password, but remember your user ID, you can create a new password online. To re-set your password you must answer two secret questions you created for your www.australia.gov.au online accounts.

What is an identity verification code (IVC)?
Registering for an eHealth record involves proving or verifying your identity. If you register for an eHealth record in person, over the phone or in writing, you will be given an identity verification code – or IVC – to help you access your record online for the first time.

You only need to use an IVC once – the first time you access your eHealth record online. However, please note that an IVC is not needed if you have registered for an eHealth record online and you were able to verify your identity online at that time.

What happens if I lose or forget my identity verification code (IVC)?
Your IVC is valid for 30 days after it has been issued. If it expires before you use it, you can request a new IVC via the helpline (1800 723 471) or visiting a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services.

Can I remove documents from my eHealth record?
You control what is in your eHealth record, so you are able to ‘remove’ a document or information about prescribed medications or other treatment from your record. If you remove documents from your record, this information will not be accessible, even in an emergency. You can also restore documents to your record if you wish.

You can also choose, in your access settings, whether you wish to restrict some healthcare organisations from viewing any or all of your eHealth record.

It is important to remember that healthcare professionals can treat you more effectively if they have access to relevant information about your health status and any treatments you have received.

What if I no longer want an eHealth record?
If you no longer want to have an eHealth record, you can cancel it online at www.ehealth.gov.au, by going into a Department of Human Services (DHS) service centre offering Medicare services, or by calling the helpline on 1800 723 471. If you cancel your eHealth record, no-one will be able to see it (including yourself) and no further information can be uploaded onto it.

You can re-register your eHealth record online at www.ehealth.gov.au, by calling the helpline on 1800 723 471 or by visiting a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services. Reactivation will again allow healthcare organisations to access your eHealth record in accordance with any changes you have made to the default restricted settings in existence before cancellation, and permit documents to be uploaded to your eHealth record. However, any clinical document created during the period that the eHealth record was deactivated will not be included in the reactivated eHealth record.
Once an eHealth record is created, how long does it last?

Once an eHealth record is created, it will be retained for a period ending 30 years after the individual has died, or, if the date of death is unknown, for 130 years after the record was first uploaded to the eHealth record system.

Privacy and security

Who can see the information on my eHealth record?
If you feel it is necessary, you can choose or limit which healthcare organisations can see and add to the information on your eHealth record. However it is important that healthcare professionals treating you have access to the vital information that they need to offer you care.

How will my personal information be kept private?
Your eHealth record is protected by existing and new legislation. Your records will also be protected by audit trails, technology and data management controls, as well as security measures to protect against unauthorised access to your information.

What happens if someone accesses my record without my permission?
Legislation, including the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Records Act 2012 and the Privacy Act 1988, contains penalties for unauthorised access to your information. If you believe someone has accessed your record without your permission, call the helpline on 1800 723 471.

How can I view my eHealth record?
You will have a user ID and password so you can view your record online whenever you want to. If you do not have online access, you can also use the telephone helpline 1800 723 471, and the operators can tell you what clinical documents are included within your eHealth record, although they will not be able to see the specific information within each clinical document.

How do I get a login and password?
You will be able to set up a user ID and password during your application to register for an eHealth record.

Who has access to my login details?
No one else has your login details. You should keep them secret so that no one else can access your information.

Will I be able to see who has accessed or updated my eHealth record?
Yes. You can see an activity history of your eHealth record, which will show you when information has been added or removed. It will also tell you which healthcare organisations have accessed or updated your information and when. If you think someone has inappropriately accessed your record you can call the helpline on 1800 723 471.

Who has access to my eHealth record?
Only you and the healthcare organisations providing your care can access and add to your record. You can also share your health information with family members, carers, or other trusted people if you wish.

If you choose to have an eHealth record, you can control what information is stored in the record and which healthcare organisations can access that information. This ability to set access control measures has been a key privacy feature of the eHealth record system.
However, only healthcare professionals involved in your care, authorised by participating Australian organisations, will be able to upload clinical information to your eHealth record.

Will my eHealth record be as safe as my current medical records?
Yes.

Where is the data on the eHealth record system kept?
Your health information is drawn from both public and private repositories, such as existing hospital data repositories, which are registered to participate in the eHealth record system. The Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record Act 2012 requires that all registered repository operators must be located within Australia and must not take or process records outside Australia.

Where can I find further information on privacy?
You can find further information on privacy and the full privacy statement at www.ehealth.gov.au using the ‘Privacy’ menu item, or visiting the Australian Government website www.staysmart.gov.au.
Chronic conditions

What are the benefits of an eHealth record if I regularly see a doctor, or see multiple doctors?
When you are regularly treated by different healthcare professionals, it can be hard to keep track of all your health information. Having an eHealth record will help you take control of your health and your health care information.

Having an eHealth record will allow your key health information (which may be otherwise held by separate healthcare organisations) to be accessed online – by you and the healthcare professionals involved in your care. As the system develops further, you will no longer have to constantly recall medical details each time you seek care.

How can I make sure information is added to the record?
You can access your eHealth record whenever you want to check the information. For example, if you have seen your doctor or had some treatment or new medications, you can ask for that information to be added to your eHealth record and then you can check to make sure it has been included.

Will I have more control and visibility over my health information and records?
An eHealth record will give you more control over your health information than ever before. You will control which healthcare organisations can view and update your information, decide which information goes into it and you can check it is up-to-date. You can also keep your own notes in your eHealth record – both private notes and notes about your health that you want to share with the healthcare professionals involved in your care.

How will my eHealth record help me take better care of myself?
You can keep track of your health in two special parts of your eHealth record. In the personal health summary you can enter information about allergies, adverse reactions and current medications. The authorised doctors and nurses at participating organisations with access to your eHealth record will be able to see the information in the personal health summary. There is also a section for personal health notes, which acts as a ‘blog’ style page for you to write about and monitor your health as you wish. Your doctors and nurses will not be able to see this section, even if they have access to your eHealth record.

Why is it better to have my medical information available as an eHealth record?
With a summary of your relevant health information available online, you can move around the health system without worrying about details being forgotten, having medical tests unnecessarily repeated or having to retell your medical history to each doctor.

What happens if I have to change the doctor I see?
It does not matter how many different doctors, nurses or other healthcare professionals you see, your eHealth record travels with you. No matter where you are or how many different healthcare professionals are involved in your care, the healthcare organisations you authorise to view your record will be seeing the same information.
Older Australians

Can someone look after my eHealth record for me, or help me maintain my record?
Yes. You can nominate a trusted person, like a carer or a family member, to access your information and help you manage it. This could be particularly important for people with chronic conditions or who require high levels of medical care and need the support of family, or a carer.

Will staff or carers at aged care facilities be able to access my eHealth record?
If the aged care facility is registered with the eHealth record system and you have given your initial consent, then authorised doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals within the organisation will be able to access your eHealth record. If you wish, you can nominate a staff member to view and manage your record on your behalf.

Can someone help me register for an eHealth record?
Yes. Help and support will be provided if you are not sure how to register or you do not have access to the internet. Phone 1800 723 471 or ask for help in a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services.

If I am vision impaired, how do I register for an eHealth record?
Phone 1800 723 471 or ask for help in a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services.

How will my eHealth record help if I cannot remember all my medical information?
When your doctor’s clinical software is updated to communicate with the eHealth record system, you can ask your doctors, nurses and other authorised healthcare professionals at participating healthcare organisations to input information so you will not need to remember all the details yourself, or carry your medical documents around with you.

A healthcare professional involved in your ongoing care, such as your GP, can create a shared health summary for you. This is a summary of your current health status and information about your health that is helpful for other healthcare professionals treating you. You can also view your record whenever you like so you can keep track of when you saw the doctor and what medications you should be taking.

Your eHealth record can be updated at any time, so if there is something missing you can let your doctor know you would like it to be included.

I travel a lot. How will my eHealth record keep up with me?
Your eHealth record is an online electronic record, so once you have provided your initial consent, any doctor, nurse or healthcare professional who is authorised by a healthcare organisation participating in the eHealth record system can quickly access your record to view, update or input information about your care. You will not have to continually remember or explain the details of your medical history.

What happens if I move to a different address?
It does not matter where you move to – your eHealth record will continue to be available so long as you choose to have it and you have access to the internet. If you move and need to change your GP, your new GP can enter ongoing information about your health care. If you need to update your address details, you will need to contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 132 011 and follow the prompts, or visit a DHS service centre offering Medicare services.
Parents

How will my baby or child benefit from having an eHealth record?
If your child has an eHealth record from birth, all their important health information can be included, meaning their eHealth record will be a complete record of key health information throughout their life.

How and when should I register my baby for an eHealth record?
If the baby or child you are registering is included on your Medicare card, you can register them for an eHealth record in the same way you can register yourself:

• Online – by visiting www.ehealth.gov.au
• Over the phone – by calling 1800 723 471 and selecting option one
• In person – by visiting a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services
• In writing – by completing a registration application form, available from a service centre offering Medicare services or from www.ehealth.gov.au, and posting it to: Personally Controlled eHealth Record Program, GPO Box 9942, In your Capital City.

If you are registering a child who is not included on your Medicare card, you will need to register them in person or in writing, as outlined above.

Why is an eHealth record better for me and my child?
You will not have to remember all your child’s visits to doctors, check-ups and immunisations, which puts you and your doctor in a much better position to make the right decisions about their care or treatment. It is extra peace of mind when you have already got enough to deal with.

When can I access my child’s eHealth record?
You can access your child’s record online whenever you need or want to. No matter what time of the day or night it is or where you are, you can always view an online summary of their medical record, as can the authorised doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals from the organisations you allow to view your record.

In line with Department of Human Services’ policy regarding the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), parents will not be able to view the MBS details of children over the age of 14.

Why is an eHealth record better if my child gets sick?
If your child’s health information has been collated onto an eHealth record since birth, you will have the reassurance that any doctor, nurse or hospital specialist treating your child will be able to see their latest health information (as long as they also have access to the eHealth record system).

How will an eHealth record help me look after my child?
Over time, as your baby grows into a child and more health information is added, the eHealth record will provide a summary of your child’s health that you can access, as well as any authorised doctors or nurses your child has to see at participating healthcare organisations. This will give you peace of mind, and help healthcare professionals provide your child with the best possible care in the future.

For example, you can keep track of your child’s health in two special parts of the eHealth record. In the personal health summary, you can enter information about any allergies, adverse reactions they have or any current medications they are taking. If your child’s doctors and nurses have access to the eHealth record, they will be able to see the information in the personal health summary. There is also a section for personal health notes, which acts as a ‘blog’ style page for you to write about and monitor your child’s health as you wish – such as recording weight and length, weaning and sleep patterns. Doctors and nurses will not be able to see this section, even if they have access to your child’s eHealth record.
Can both parents register a child for an eHealth record?
Only one parent can create a child’s eHealth record, however the other parent can be added as an authorised representative so that both parents can access the record. If the child is being registered via the paper registration form, one parent creates the eHealth record and then completes the additional ‘authorised representative’ form to give the other parent access. If the record is created online, the parent whose Medicare card includes the child’s details creates the record and the other can then be added as an authorised representative.

Who else can access my child’s eHealth record?
If you wish, you can share your baby’s health information with their other parent, guardian, grandparents or other trusted people. Once your child’s eHealth record has been created, you can add authorised representatives either online, or by completing a form available from www.ehealth.gov.au or from a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services.

Who will be able to see the personal notes on my child’s eHealth record?
Only you and the other people you have nominated to have access to your child’s eHealth record (such as grandparents, carers or your partner) will be able to see the personal notes section. Doctors and nurses will not be able to see this section, even if they have access to your child’s eHealth record.

Can my child access their own eHealth record?
Except where special circumstances exist, you will have control over your child’s eHealth record from 0 to 14 years.

After a child turns 14, they will be eligible to take control of their own eHealth record, in the same way they can apply for their own Medicare card.

After a child turns 18, you will automatically lose access to your child’s eHealth record, even if they have not taken control of their record. If you still wish to view your child’s eHealth record after they turn 18, your child will need to take control of their record and set you up as a nominated representative.
Mental health consumer and carer FAQs

What is a personally controlled electronic health (eHealth) record?
An eHealth record is an electronic summary of your health information. You and your chosen health services can access your eHealth record via the internet whenever you need, from wherever you are. You decide what information goes in it and who is able to see which parts of your record.

What information will be in my eHealth record?
Your eHealth record will contain summary electronic documents and information that you decide are important for your health, storing them in an easily accessible electronic format. It will keep health information such as your medical conditions, mental health history, medications, allergies and immunisations.

Your eHealth record will build up over time and eventually hold information about your prescriptions, test results, outcomes from inpatient hospital stays, interactions with GPs, community-based health and mental health organisations and specialist letters.

How will an eHealth record help me get better mental health care?
Being in control of your general and mental health information puts you at the centre of your care and recovery journey.

If you have a mental health issue, having an eHealth record can make getting the right treatment and ongoing physical and mental health care easier, safer and better coordinated.

- **Easier** – you will not have to repeat or remember the healthcare professionals you have seen or your medications.
- **Safer** – mental healthcare professionals can view your important healthcare information including allergies, medication, treatment you have received and who is involved in your mental health care.
- **Better coordinated care** – other health and mental healthcare professionals will be able to know who is doing what to support your general health and your mental health recovery journey.

Who will be able to contribute to my eHealth record?
If your chosen doctor, registered nurse or registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker has joined the eHealth record system, they can create a shared health summary for you and upload it to your eHealth record. This is an overview of your current health status, and can include information about your mental health that is helpful for you, your carer and other healthcare professionals.

You can enter your own personal notes, for your own private use like a health diary.

With your permission, other healthcare professionals participating in the eHealth record system will also be able to upload their consultations with you and the outcome to your eHealth record.

Is it compulsory to have an eHealth record?
No. It is voluntary to sign up to the eHealth record system for consumers and healthcare professionals. You can also decide to opt out of the system at any time.

How much will it cost to have an eHealth record?
It is free to register and use your eHealth record.

If I have an eHealth record, will this replace my usual records?
No. An eHealth record will not replace your doctor, nurse or mental health service’s written or electronic clinical records. It will bring together an online summary of your health information.
Is the information in my eHealth record safe and secure?
Yes. Your eHealth record is protected by law and strong regulations. You will have a login and password to access your eHealth record, and control over which organisations can view your information.

Only the healthcare and mental health professionals you authorised will be able to view and upload information to your eHealth record. In the unlikely case of another person accessing your file, you will be able to see this in your audit log.

Can I see who has looked at or updated my eHealth record?
Privacy and security is at the forefront of the eHealth record system design. The eHealth record system will keep a log of everyone who has accessed your record and you will be able to see this when you log in. There are strong penalties for people who access the system without permission, or misuse information they see.

If you have concerns about someone inappropriately accessing your eHealth record, you can contact the helpline on 1800 723 471.

Will I have control over my eHealth record?
Yes. You will have more control over your information with an eHealth record than you do now. You will control what information is stored in the record, who can update and see your information, which parts of your record particular healthcare organisations can see (e.g. information from your mental health service provider) and who can add to it. You can also check that it is up to date.

You will also be able to make your own private notes in a special area in your eHealth record. You can use this like an online health diary. You could keep a record of how you are feeling on any particular day, or use it as a prompt for when you are speaking to your doctors.

How do I access my eHealth record?
You will set up a login and password when you register for an eHealth record.

You can then access your eHealth record online using this login and password and see your record whenever you want to.

Who can see information about my mental health on my eHealth record?
You have the option to control who can access your eHealth record. This includes setting controls so that particular documents or reports can only be viewed by certain healthcare organisations.

The purpose of eHealth records are to share important health information with those involved in your care, helping to better coordinate your health care. You may decide that you want all healthcare organisations and professionals to be able to see your general and mental health information for the purpose of providing health care to you, which is the default setting when you set up your eHealth record. If you choose to leave the controls at the default setting, and if a healthcare organisation is registered with the eHealth record system, then all doctors, nurses and other authorised staff in this organisation will be able to see your eHealth record.

What if I do not want certain healthcare professionals to see parts of my record?
Some people recovering from mental illness may not want all healthcare professionals to see all their health history or information. You will have the option to choose, or limit, which healthcare organisations can see the information or particular documents on your eHealth record.

If you are going to a healthcare professional for something that you feel is unrelated to your mental health condition, you may choose not to give permission for them to view certain parts of your record, by restricting your access settings. However, it is very important that your healthcare professionals have access to all the information they need to offer you the best possible care. Therefore, limiting information should be done only after thinking about the implications of a healthcare professional not knowing all of your health history.
Can my carer see my eHealth record?
Yes, if you give them permission. You can choose any trusted person, such as a carer, family member or healthcare professional, to see your eHealth record and help you manage it. They can help you enter and update information.

How can I make sure the right information about my mental health is added to my eHealth record?
You can check your eHealth record online whenever you. So when you see a mental health professional, you can agree that they enter information about your consultation. This will help you track your treatment. However, if you believe there is something missing or incorrect in your eHealth record, you can ask your mental health professional to include or correct it.

What if I disagree with something that has been entered in my eHealth record or a document that I want to remove?
The suggested first step is to talk to the healthcare professional that made the entry or uploaded the document. This allows you to remain in control and clarify any questions about your care.

Remember, you have the right to determine what is in your eHealth record. You can remove documents from view and you can reinstate them whenever you want. However, before you effectively remove any documents, you should consider the implications this may have for your care. Talking to a trusted healthcare professional, carer or friend before effectively removing a document is often helpful.

Will healthcare professionals I have not authorised be able to access my eHealth record in a life-threatening emergency?
In an emergency, it is important for the healthcare team treating you to have as much information as possible available. The eHealth record system allows temporary access to a healthcare organisation or professional, such as a hospital emergency department, but only if a healthcare professional believes there is a serious threat to life, health or safety. It will also allow them to see who is the custodian of your advance care directive, if you have one.

If you were to have a physical or mental health emergency where your life was at risk, healthcare professionals would be able to quickly see your record, enabling them to give you the safest and best possible treatment and care. This access is valid only for a short time (up to five days) and you will be notified through your audit log.

What happens if I go to a number of different healthcare professionals?
It does not matter how many different doctors, nurses or mental health professionals you see, your eHealth record travels with you. No matter where you are, if you give your healthcare professionals permission, they will all be able to see the same information.

Can someone else look after my eHealth record or help me manage it?
Yes. You can choose a trusted person, such as a carer or family member, to see your information and help you manage it. With your permission, they will be able to help you enter and update information.

Can someone help me register for an eHealth record?
Yes. Help and support will be provided if you are not sure how to register or you do not have internet access. Phone 1800 723 471 or ask for help in a Department of Human Services service centre offering Medicare services.

Where can I get advice on how best to manage my eHealth record?
You will find help and support at www.ehealth.gov.au (follow the links to the learning centre), or through the helpline, 1800 723 471.
Frequently asked questions – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

What is a personally controlled electronic health (eHealth) record?
An eHealth record is a summary of your health information that you and your chosen health services can see online whenever you need, from wherever you are.

Do I have to have an eHealth record?
No. It is your choice. If you choose not to have an eHealth record, you will keep getting the same healthcare as you do at the moment.

What will be in my eHealth record?
Your eHealth record is an overall picture of your health. It will show important health information such as your medical conditions, medications, allergies and immunisations, and if you choose, your Indigenous status.

Your eHealth record will build up over time and will eventually hold information about your prescriptions, test results, treatment during hospital stays, and referrals to specialists to help you get better, safer and quicker health care.

You will also have your own private section where you can put in your own notes about your health.

Why should I have an eHealth record?
An eHealth record will be especially helpful for people who have a chronic condition such as diabetes or heart disease, and who are on lots of different medications and visit many health services. Your important health information will be available online so you can move around health services without worrying about medications being forgotten, having unnecessary medical tests repeated or having to tell your whole medical story to each doctor.

Having an eHealth record can make getting the right treatment faster, safer and easier for you and your family.
- **Faster** – health care services will not have to spend time searching for missing information. So you will not have to wait as long.
- **Safer** – health services can view your important health care information including medications, allergies, immunisations and other treatment you have received.
- **Easier** – you will not have to remember the results of tests you have had or the medications you have been prescribed.

How is an eHealth record different to what I have now?
At the moment, all your health care information is stored in different files at each of the health services you use, for example, Aboriginal Health or Medical Service, GP clinics, pharmacy, physiotherapist or hospital, and it is difficult for them to share your information with other health professionals involved in your care.

An eHealth record will mean your health services can share information that is important to your health care. This will help them to give you better, safer and faster care more easily.

When can I get my eHealth record?
The eHealth journey begins when you register for an eHealth record. The eHealth record system will be built up over time as more people and health care services register.

Parts of the Northern Territory have been using shared eHealth records for over seven years and have seen many positive health benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
Who can see my eHealth record and how will it be protected?
You control who sees the information on your eHealth record, so only you and your chosen health care services can see your eHealth record. If you decide not to set the controls on your eHealth record, all the information can be seen by all of the participating health care services who are treating you. If you are not sure about how to set these controls, please talk to someone at your health service.

You can also nominate a trusted person such as a family member or carer to look after your eHealth record on your behalf. This could be particularly important for people with chronic conditions or Elders who may need extra support.

Your eHealth record will be protected by law and there will be tough privacy and security rules as well as penalties for people who break these rules. If you feel someone has accessed your record inappropriately please contact the helpline by calling 1800 723 471.

How can I see my eHealth record?
You will set up a login and password for your eHealth record when you register. Then you will be able to see your record online through www.ehealth.gov.au whenever you want to.

You can also use the telephone helpline on 1800 723 471 and the operators can tell you what documents are on your record, although they will not be able to see the actual information in your record.

What if I do not have a computer or Internet access?
When you visit your chosen health service, they may be able to help you. This includes changes to your important health information and the services you choose to be able to see your eHealth record. You can also phone the helpline on 1800 723 471, or ask at your Medicare office.

Will healthcare professionals be able to see my eHealth record if I have an accident, even if I have not given them permission?
In an emergency, a health service can temporarily see your eHealth record even if you are not able to give them your permission. So if you have an accident and for example are unconscious, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals are able to give you the safest, best possible treatment.

What if I travel around or need to go to another health service?
Over time, your eHealth record will be available online everywhere you go. No matter where you travel or how many different health services are involved in your care, they can all see the same information if you give them consent to see your eHealth record. This means you will be able to get the best possible care.

This is also useful because if you go back home to your normal health service after going somewhere else, they will know what happened at the other health service and if anything has changed in your care.

As long as the health service that you choose has joined the eHealth record system, they can look at your eHealth record and put in information about your care.

Can someone help me register for an eHealth record?
Yes. If you are not sure how to register or you do not have the Internet, you can contact Medicare and the staff there can help you register, or phone 1800 723 471.

What if I have questions?
A dedicated eHealth call centre has been set up to help you. So call 1800 723 471 if you would like more information or need help. You can also talk to your local health service.