



Privacy Commissioner
Te Mana Matapono Matatapu

Protecting trust and privacy in electronic health records - report

25 September 2014

A new report by the Privacy Commissioner on three electronic shared care record (SCR) systems says they are well-managed projects that are appropriately mitigating privacy risks, but that continued attention to privacy is needed if health consumer and provider trust is to be maintained.

The *Electronic Shared Care Records Review: Elements of Trust* report reviewed three regional health agency projects and found the projects met their clinical objectives and complied with their obligations under the Health Information Privacy Code (HIPC).

The SCRs reviewed all demonstrated an appropriate level of concern for the privacy of health consumers, and that the agencies developing them were eager to make any necessary changes to address privacy shortfalls.

The information gathered by the review will be used to provide clear recommendations for appropriate minimum standards and draw conclusions about whether similar projects are being properly assessed for privacy risks.

“Patients need to trust their care providers, and providers trust that other providers will properly manage the information that is entrusted to them. Trust takes time to build, but can be damaged in a very short space of time,” the report says.

The *Elements of Trust* report says healthcare occurs in an environment that demands a high level of trust. SCRs save health providers time and money, and reduce waiting times for patients. But if patients and medical professionals become unsure that health information is being properly protected, they will be unlikely to support the introduction and continued use of SCRs.

“Patients need to trust their care providers, and providers trust that other providers will properly manage the information that is entrusted to them. Trust takes time to build, but can be damaged in a very short space of time.”

Health information requires proper governance and appropriate security. As a wide range of small and large scale electronic record projects are developed around the country, it is important there are also degrees of patient control and transparency to facilitate trust.

The three regional SCR projects featured are:

- **Compass Health SCR** - an electronic summary SCR, based on the MedTech ManageMyHealth platform. There are 45 practices supplying information to the Compass SCR in Wairarapa, MidCentral and Capital and Coast DHB areas.
- **Canterbury DHB Electronic SCR** - a shared view patient health record developed after the Christchurch earthquakes as part of the overall Canterbury region earthquake recovery effort. It covers about 500,000 people.
- **HealthLink Care Insight** - an electronic service provided by HealthLink and delivered over the New Zealand Health Network operated by HealthLink. It has been used in Hawkes Bay, Nelson, Gisborne and Northland.

The *Electronic Shared Care Records Review: Elements of Trust* report is now available at www.privacy.org.nz.

For more information, contact Charles Mabbett 021 509 735.

ENDS