

eHealth NSW news

JULY 2021



eHealth

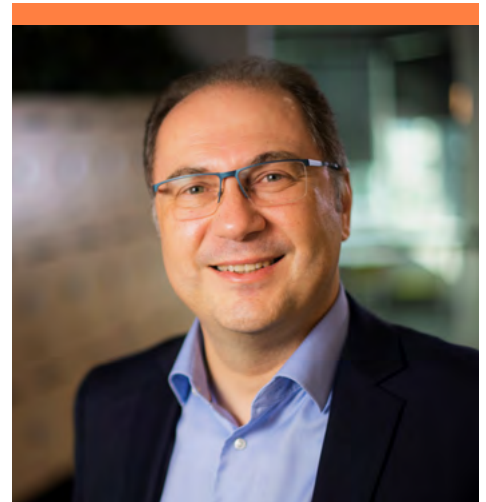


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Chief Executive's message



eHealth NSW continues to play a pivotal role in supporting NSW Health's COVID-19 response – from delivering vaccination management solutions to providing QR code test result systems and everything in between.

In this edition of eHealth NSW News, we will reflect on the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and celebrate the many digital initiatives we've delivered in partnership with our health agency and industry colleagues over the past six months.

From celebrating Telestroke's first anniversary to seeing firsthand the impact of telehealth in treating patients with chronic pain, virtual care technology continues to be widely embraced across our local health districts. We hear from clinicians on the positive benefits the critical care camera upgrade is bringing to Districts and Networks such as Murrumbidgee LHD as well as how videoconferencing technology has helped HealthShare NSW complete 120 remote food safety audits across NSW.

We look at new initiatives that are benefitting both NSW Health staff and the patients and citizens of NSW. Two of our key projects have focused on giving both patients and clinicians a stronger voice in the design and delivery of our systems.

Approximately 4,000 clinicians state-wide completed the KLAS Research survey, providing insight into their experiences using eMRs to inform future strategies and improve usability. Patients too can now provide feedback through the Patient Reported Measures tool, part of a collaboration between the Ministry of Health, Agency for Clinical Innovation and eHealth NSW.

Many of our clinical programs have also been moving at pace with the double implementation of eMeds at both Camden and Campbelltown hospitals bringing us just one site away from project completion. The continuing roll out of our medical imaging system, RIS-PACS, as well as the successful launch of the electronic transfer of care solution (eTOC), the first-of-its-kind in Australia, are both highlighted in this edition.

Our infrastructure, the very foundation underpinning our systems, is also undergoing a refresh with significant progress being made in the adoption of multi-cloud services, among many other initiatives.

This edition, however, isn't just about the technology but the people and partnerships that bring it to life. In March, we celebrated International Women's Day, and as an organisation we continue to seek ways to improve the role all staff can play in promoting an equitable future and driving better health outcomes for NSW Health.

With the beginning of the new financial year, we continue to progress with more exciting programs of work – Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR), Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM), Cyber Security Uplift and ICT Service Commissioning to name a few. Partnerships are key to delivering these programs, and I'd like to thank and acknowledge our NSW Health colleagues and our industry partners who work alongside us to digitally transform our public health system.

I'd also like to recognise the extraordinary efforts of the dedicated staff of eHealth NSW. Many of our teams have worked around the clock to support this vital work and I'm extremely proud to share and celebrate some of their achievements in this issue of eHealth NSW News.

Thank you,



Dr Zoran Bolevich

Chief Executive, eHealth NSW
Chief Information Officer, NSW Health

“Key projects have focused on giving both patients and clinicians a stronger voice in the design and delivery of our systems”

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Chief Executive, eHealth NSW
Chief Information Officer, NSW Health





eHealth NSW plays key role in digital health response for COVID-19 vaccination roll out

eHealth NSW is playing a key role in vaccination planning and mobilisation, working closely with local health districts (LHDs), the State and Federal governments to support the COVID-19 vaccination roll out program. With the impending arrival of vaccines at the beginning of 2021, eHealth NSW worked closely with the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), the State Health Emergency Operations Centre (SHEOC), the Commonwealth and other states and territories to fast-track digital efforts to support the mass vaccination of NSW Health staff and other frontline workers such as police and quarantine and border workers.

Since the inception of the COVID-19 vaccination program, eHealth NSW worked rapidly to develop a digital system to fast-track the vaccination of frontline workers. This solution, CoVax, continued to be enhanced and was ultimately made available for bookings by the general public.

In parallel, to ensure scalability and ease of use, work commenced with industry to design a platform for managing the entire vaccination administration process: from booking an appointment, to tracking vaccination doses, recording clinical information and interfacing with the Australian Immunisation Register.



Since launching the state's vaccination program, more than 1,370,500 doses have been administered using NSW Health vaccination management systems.*

The CoVax Solution went live on 14 February 2021 with South Western Sydney Local Health District. It was developed in record time, within 21 business days, and with assistance from Microsoft, DGL and Whispir. It is currently being used by 64 individual clinics across 14 of the 17 NSW Health local health districts and specialty networks.

So far, it has been used to capture more than 675,000 vaccination registrations and re-released more than 80 times in response to system user feedback. Anecdotally this has been extremely positive.

Teams from eHealth NSW also helped to support Sydney Local Health District with the implementation of the MyCovax (5Faces) solution, which supports the state's first mass vaccination hub at Sydney Olympic Park.

Alongside this, the NSW Health Vaccination Administration Management (VAM) Platform, developed in partnership with ServiceNow, went live on 11 June 2021. It was also configured and implemented in just 10 business days.

Simon James, eHealth NSW Executive Director, Customer Engagement and Services Transition, said "The eHealth NSW team has worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to provide a secure digital solution for vaccination bookings in record time to ensure the safe and timely rollout of the vaccination program in NSW." This is a significant achievement for eHealth NSW and the NSW Health system," said Mr James.

Teams across eHealth NSW are working to transition appointments from CoVax to VAM, which is a complex undertaking as updates continue to be made to the system and its usage remains high. Appointments have already successfully transitioned from several live clinics and the speed and efficacy of this process continues to improve.

*Numbers quoted are from COVID-19 Update Media Release 20210727.



New QR codes make COVID-19 testing easier

Receiving COVID-19 test results just got easier for patients in Northern NSW, who can now use their mobile phones, and an individual QR code, to automatically set up an SMS process to deliver their results.

All four hospital testing clinics in the region are introducing the QR code system to simplify the way in which results are provided.

“Using this new process, we’re reducing both the time taken for a patient to register for the SMS result notification, and the possibility of data being incorrect or mismatched,” Wayne Jones, Chief Executive Northern NSW Local Health District, said.

“It’s now a one-step scan, rather than having to enter multiple pieces of personal information over a series of text messages,” he added.

“For our community members who may speak another language, it will help reduce barriers for them to register to receive their results via SMS.

If patients need help to register, our clinic staff are right there and can walk them through the process.”



Patients who have used the new QR code system at Lismore Base Hospital have said it was ‘much easier’ and far more ‘user-friendly’.

A collaboration between eHealth NSW, NSW Health Pathology and Clinical Information System teams from Northern NSW Local Health District, the project has been several months in development.

NSW Health Pathology Chief Information Officer, James Patterson, said “this innovative generation of a personalised QR code in real-time is really helping NSW Health Pathology help our patients. Not only does it reduce the cost of sending a patient result but because the code is generated from the patient’s own PAS record, it eliminates any possibility of a mismatch between the PAS and what the patient may type into the system. We have seen error rates drop from 6 per cent to 0 per cent where the personalised QR is used. The system not only saves time and cost for NSW Health Pathology, it also speeds up results for patients.”

There are more than 300 COVID-19 testing locations across NSW. To find your nearest clinic visit www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others/clinics or contact your GP.

It’s worth noting, private pathology providers may deliver results differently, so it is important for people to check with the clinic where they are tested for their preferred notification service.



COVID-19 prompts hospital food safety audits to go digital

When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, the Food Service and Quality Assurance teams from HealthShare NSW had to stop the mandatory regulatory on-site audits in each of the state's 151 hospitals.

Passing the NSW Food Authority audit gives each hospital the formal tick of approval to continue serving food each year.

"When COVID-19 hit, we had to suspend all facility audits for the next 60 days. We just had to stop dead and shut down auditing," explained Acting Quality Assurance Manager Fifi Spechler, HealthShare NSW.

"We knew that if COVID-19 continued, we'd have to find another way of doing the audits. Without them we aren't licensed to provide food in our hospitals or aged care facilities."

In response, eHealth NSW and HealthShare NSW partnered together to digitally shift 151 on-site food audits to virtual audits.

"The technology had to replicate what the auditor could do if they were physically on site. They need to see and inspect anything in real-time, right down to individual items in our freezers and fridges," Ms Spechler said.

"The auditor, a member of my team and a Food Service site manager also had to connect at the same time, despite being in three different locations across the state."

"To connect everything up, we needed the right network infrastructure, the right software, the right device and the right user access to all be in place," said Seraaj Slamang, Project Manager, eHealth NSW.



Christine Nolte from HealthShare NSW Food and Patient Support Services conducting a virtual food audit at Tumut Hospital

"It had to be a live call, not recorded. Many people are on the call with someone walking around the hospital. Often in areas that have no or limited internet connection."

Leveraging existing critical statewide infrastructure, such as statewide Wi-Fi, the team chose Skype for Business live stream coupled with iPads with a camera as the digital solution.

"We turned on Skype and the iPad camera, and then, basically over the internet, the auditor did their inspection," Ms Spechler explained.



“They looked at the cleanliness of the facility, viewed use-by dates on cans and watched if staff were doing the right processes such as sanitising fruit and vegetables. One of the requirements was that there must be warm running water in the kitchens. Food service staff held a thermometer under the running water so the auditor could view live the temperature. Food Service staff stood at the entrance of cold rooms and freezers. They also panned the room with the camera so the auditor could request to view an item off any shelf. It really was a true comparison to the traditional audit. The digital experience mimicked the onsite experience incredibly well.”

By the end of 2020, the team had completed 120 remote audits. All sites received an A-grade rating, the highest that can be achieved. “In the ‘old days’ the food audit would mean a huge amount of travelling for the audit team, and WH&S could be a real issue. Normally, we did 12 audits per month because of the distances to drive between hospitals. Now, we spend that time working with the hospital teams on quality improvement, such as training.”

For the Food Audit team, the experience was extremely positive. They’re now re-imagining how food audits will run post the pandemic. To find out more about leveraging similar digital technologies please contact the eHealth NSW project team at EHNSW-Skype4BusinessProject@health.nsw.gov.au

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Fifi Spechler

Acting Quality Assurance Manager,
Healthshare NSW





Celebrating Telestroke's one-year anniversary

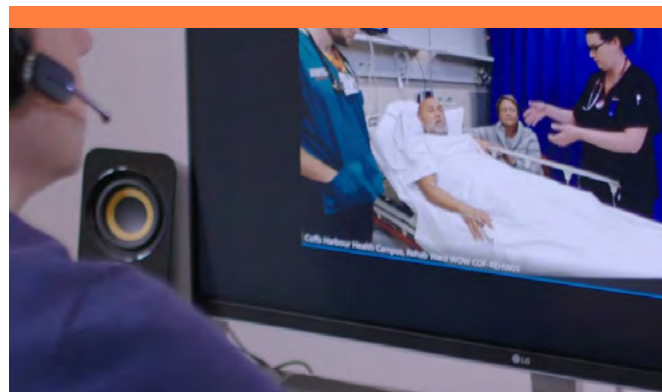
On 16 March 2021, the NSW Telestroke Service celebrated its first anniversary, with more than 850 patients treated since the service's statewide rollout began.

Telestroke gives rural and regional patients access to high-quality specialist clinical care across NSW. Hosted by Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital, it connects stroke specialists with local emergency physicians to determine the most appropriate treatment plan.

The Service leverages eHealth NSW's statewide technology platforms including, Skype for Business, statewide Wi-Fi, HWAN (Health Wide Area Network) and the EIR (Enterprise Imaging Repository). The EIR plays a particularly important role providing fast clinical access to centralised multimodal brain imaging. This supports quicker diagnostic and treatment decisions. The sooner a clinician can diagnose and treat a patient, the better the recovery.

More than 850 rural and regional patients have already benefited from rapid stroke assessment, treatment and management via the service.

Professor Ken Butcher, Medical Director of the NSW Telestroke Service and Director Clinical Neuroscience, Prince of Wales Hospital, said the service bridges more than just geographical distances in the fight against stroke which is one of Australia's biggest killers and a leading cause of disability.



Telestroke service delivers enhanced patient care across regional NSW through virtual technologies

"The statewide launch of Telestroke in March 2020 coincided with the outbreak of COVID-19, which demonstrated how well this model of care can work during COVID-19 and beyond," he said.

"Every year around 19,000 residents in NSW have a stroke and more than a third live in regional, remote or rural areas. Using Telestroke, our clinicians can deliver better outcomes for patients exhibiting signs of stroke by harnessing this cutting-edge technology – irrespective of location."

The NSW Telestroke Service is available at 11 sites in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Shoalhaven, Grafton, Griffith, Tweed Heads and Deniliquin and will roll out to up to 23 sites by June 2022.



Critical care camera at
Murrumbidgee LHD

Critical care camera upgrade helps provide life-saving advice

Immediate, round-the-clock access to specialist advice will ensure improved patient care, particularly for those in need of critical care, thanks to the installation of over 130 critical care cameras as part of a major upgrade to regional and remote services across NSW.

The cameras provide clinicians with access to specialists based at other locations, who can view the patient directly and provide advice to those on the ground. This speeds up diagnosis and treatment for patients and assists clinicians in making informed decisions to better manage a patient's care.

Dr Shannon Nott, Clinical Director, Virtual Care Accelerator (VCA), said the new cameras and their additional features will make a huge difference. "Not only is this new equipment a game changer for frontline staff and patients, it will ensure a consistent approach across the state when using the network which is primarily located in Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units and Special Care Nurseries," he said.

The new cameras and network have been piloted in Murrumbidgee, Sydney, Southern, South West Sydney and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts (LHDs), and according to Phil Major, District Manager Patient Flow, the new equipment is already having a big impact in the Murrumbidgee LHD.

"Our team has found the new network to be user-friendly; the cameras are quick to activate, extremely reliable and provide first class video images," Phil said. "Users have consistently told us that they are highly satisfied, and we also have peace of mind knowing that we can access 24/7 state-wide technical support."

According to Ian Schrader, VCA Program Director, the new cameras are simple to use and provide higher quality images and video stream. "Relevant specialists located offsite will be able to use a custom-built secure web portal to view a live stream, control the camera, take screenshots and access cameras across multiple LHDs."

The new cameras and network are being progressively deployed across the state. The rollout is a key initiative of the VCA, a partnership led by eHealth NSW and the Agency for Clinical Innovation, to advance virtual care across NSW Health.



Chronic pain support boosted by telehealth in the Hunter

Chronic pain can have significant effects on a patient's day-to-day life and mental health.

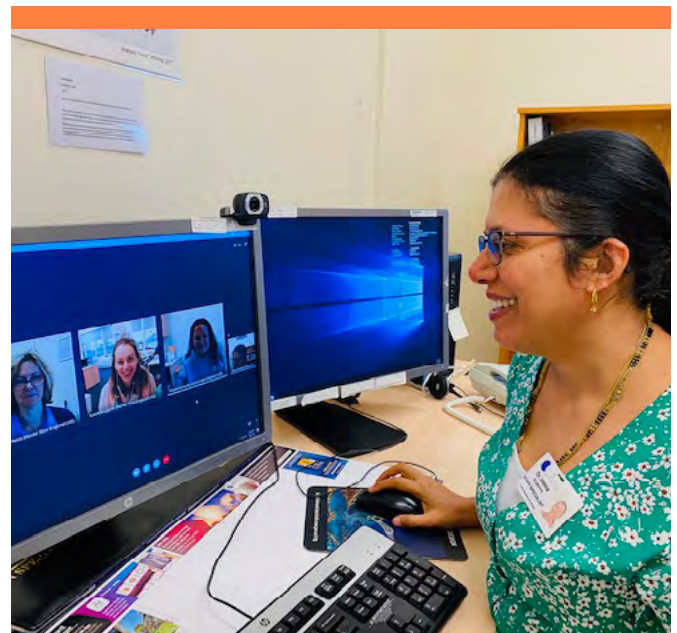
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hunter Integrated Pain Service turned to telehealth to help patients across the region continue their chronic pain management when they couldn't see doctors face to face.

"We're now using Skype for Business with patients in several ways. We do one-on-one consultations as well as online webinars for larger groups," said Dr Hema Rajappa from Hunter Integrated Pain Service.

"Prior to COVID-19, we were running in-person seminars of 25-30 people to go through pain education but have since moved to webinars where we can reach a broader range of people across the region," Dr Rajappa added. "We've had to develop and adapt our online services as we go. We found that asking patients to watch a video on pain management wasn't as effective as the interactive nature of a live webinar."

However, face to face appointments have not been fully replaced with online appointments. Hunter Integrated Pain Service recognises that patient selection for online appointments and webinars is very important. Each patient is fully assessed for their suitability for virtual consultations to ensure they are getting the most appropriate care.

"A patient who is already in pain may find getting online difficult, and that can be very frustrating. We check if they are clinically suitable for online interactions first. We then contact them regarding their access to the internet and familiarity with using videoconferencing tools before emailing them a link."

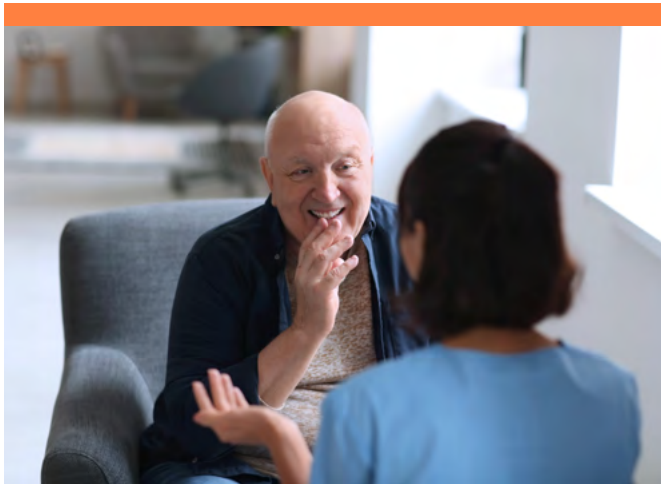


Dr Hema Rajappa from Hunter Integrated Pain Service meets regularly with colleagues via Skype for Business

"Some patients prefer to access their online appointments in their GP surgery. That way the practice nurse or GP can also participate in the assessment and formulation of pain management, so everyone is then on the same page."

"Videoconferencing is so convenient, once you get used to it. With group sessions we're still adapting and evolving, but with individual appointments it's really easy, because we've had a lot of practice," Dr Rajappa explained.

"Even beyond the pandemic, we will continue with online appointments and interactive webinars, which are providing a great alternative for our patients."



Health outcomes and patient experience to deliver new insights

A platform designed by eHealth NSW in collaboration with the Agency for Clinical Innovation is giving patients and their carers the opportunity to provide direct and timely feedback about their health-related experiences.

First rolled out in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District in February, at its heart is a focus on identifying what matters to patients, with the long-term aim to improve health care experiences.

For clinicians and service providers, it's an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their patient's concerns and lives, and a chance to improve patient-centred care.

Already live at over 60 sites, there are another 20 sites set to come online as part of the Patient Reported Measures (PRM) program in the next few months.

Co-designed with significant input from consumers, carers, clinicians and service managers, the survey platform can be accessed via an easy-to-use online portal: <https://engage.health.nsw.gov.au/engage>.

The digital solution, known as the Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE) platform, gives patients the opportunity to communicate with their health professional and discuss their illness or care impacts on their health and wellbeing.

It also captures information on the patient's experience with various services. The surveys will be completed over the course of the patient or carer's healthcare journey to ensure their care team better understands what matters to them.

In turn, the care team will have immediate access to reports and dashboards, as well as the ability to run their own reports and adjust their patient's care plan as their journey continues.

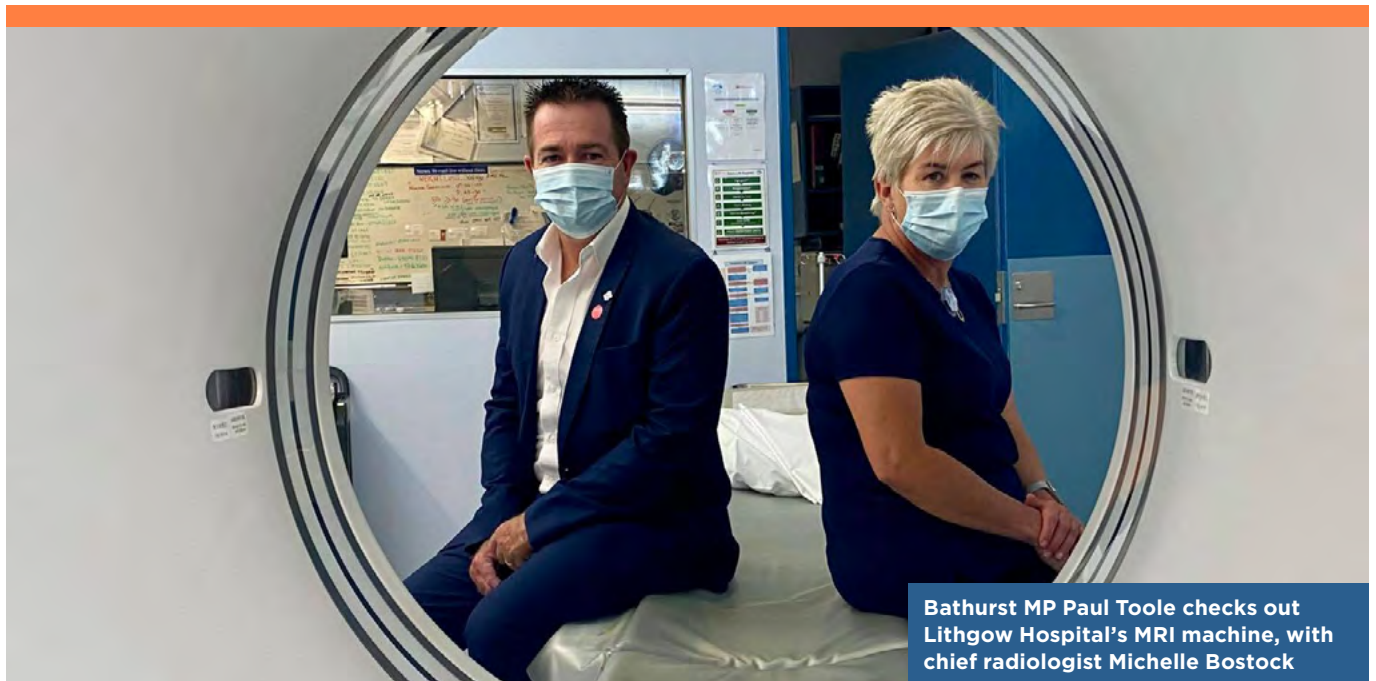
The aim of this new collection of data is to provide health professionals with a deeper understanding of a person's disease burden, symptoms or treatment impacts, so they can provide more holistic care.

The aggregate data will be used to identify what is working well across health services and drive improvements in service delivery.

NSW Health will also use the aggregate data to evaluate progress towards a value-based healthcare system: measuring outcomes and experiences that matter to patients.

The HOPE PRM solution continues to receive positive feedback from patients and health professionals.

"The survey was great. I think it is a great tool to address my depression, because let's face it that's what I have and can get help with it. I was always told growing up not to complain and I find it hard to express how I'm feeling but the survey was a great tool to express that," said, an inpatient with chronic heart failure.



Bathurst MP Paul Toole checks out
Lithgow Hospital's MRI machine, with
chief radiologist Michelle Bostock

Medical imaging system to improve patient experience

Lithgow residents are benefitting from a state-of-the-art medical imaging system designed to provide clinicians with real-time access to x-rays, CT scans, MRIs, nuclear medicine scans and ultrasounds performed in public hospitals.

The new Radiology Information System and Picture Archiving and Communication System (RIS-PACS) is live at several NSW hospitals within Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health Districts.

The system enables clinicians to access complete imaging histories, comparison images and reports, ensuring that a patient's journey can be tracked from image request through to diagnosis – storing key information, digital images and results for instant access by hospital-based treating teams.

Chief Radiographer at Lithgow Hospital, Michelle Bostock said RIS-PACS will allow continuity of care and quicker specialist reviews. "When critically ill patients return home from large city hospitals, we will now be able to view and compare their images locally," she said.

With up to 2,500 imaging examinations performed at Lithgow Hospital each month, the benefits of the RIS-PACS system will be felt by many in the local community. "RIS-PACS will support our people to enhance the excellent patient-focused service provided by the Imaging Department at Lithgow Hospital," Ms Bostock said.

The introduction of RIS-PACS at Lithgow Hospital is part of a state-wide program delivering streamlined medical imaging services across NSW. It's currently being deployed at Ryde, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai, Mona Vale and Royal North Shore Hospitals with Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts on schedule for the end of the year.



Clinicians have their say on improving the electronic medical record

In a digitally enabled health system, electronic medical record systems (eMRs) are the foundation of delivering healthcare. Used to record a patient's medical history including treatment plans and test results, they are a vital tool to inform clinical decisions.

As one of the most used clinical tools, it is essential that clinicians can have their say on the capabilities and functionality of eMR systems. During February and March, eHealth NSW, in partnership with KLAS Research, explored clinicians' experiences using eMRs via an industry-specific survey. Through its international research, KLAS has identified three key pillars that contribute to user satisfaction with eMR systems. These are: strong user mastery, shared ownership and that the eMR meets the user's unique needs.

Targeting all eMR users across NSW Health, approximately 4,000 responses were received. The survey closed in April. KLAS Research has analysed the results and is in the process of sharing these with Local Health Districts.

In joining the KLAS Research Arch Collaborative, NSW Health can also benchmark with other healthcare organisations internationally and collaborate to identify best practice. The insights gathered will enable us to benchmark feedback across NSW Health.

Key survey findings for NSW Health highlight that most users would like more training and a greater say in driving and informing eMR developments and changes. eHealth NSW will work with Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks to identify areas to prioritise and focus. We will also strengthen communication of changes and fixes to the eMR and collaborate to uplift EMR training and education. The KLAS survey will be administered annually to track user satisfaction.

Survey results will also inform the way we build the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) system. SDPR will have strong clinical involvement – throughout all phases of its build, implementation and governance. The report findings have identified experiences we can use to improve the eMR and strategies to maximise its use to drive consistency, efficiency and quality of care across NSW Health.

For more information please contact
EHNSW-KLASResearch@health.nsw.gov.au





eMeds now live at Camden and Campbelltown

Marking the first ever double 'go live', electronic medication management (eMeds) was implemented at both Camden and Campbelltown Hospitals on 23 March.

The double activation also marks the fourth implementation for South West Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD), with the new system providing significant digital capabilities.

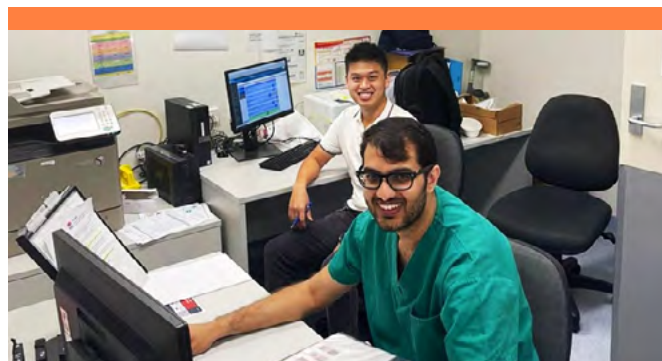
Dr Ruchi Shah SRMO, General Medicine, Campbelltown Hospital said she was proud to be part of the eMeds team at Campbelltown Hospital. "The eMeds system is the most accurate, safe and efficient way of medication management. eMeds increases transparency across various multidisciplinary teams and contributes to the delivery of timely care to patients," she said. "As a result, clinicians will now be able to spend more of their valuable time with patients to deliver quality care."

The new system improves the accuracy and visibility of medication information between clinicians, allowing them to view medication records electronically rather than searching through paper files.

More than 2,095 staff at both hospitals completed the training in preparation for the change which saw five teams complete the conversion to eMeds in both facilities in just three and a half days.

"I am very proud of the achievement of the SWSLHD eMeds team. We have worked hard to refine our processes and deliver the best result for patient safety and staff useability," Sally Walker, eMeds Project Manager, SWSLHD, said.

"The amazing clinicians at SWSLHD have embraced the change and benefits of eMeds and are utilising the functionality to provide the highest quality of care to our patients."



Pictured: Jason Vu, Informatics Pharmacist, Liverpool Hospital Pharmacy and Dr Rahul Lal, Campbelltown Hospital, Resident Medical Officer

When eMeds is implemented at Fairfield Hospital later this year, it will mark the last of 200 sites across NSW Health, and the completion of the project.

For more information on eMeds, please contact eHealth NSW's eMR Connect Program Team via email at EHNSW-eMR-Evaluation@health.nsw.gov.au

"As a result, clinicians will now be able to spend more of their valuable time with patients to deliver quality care"

Dr Ruchi Shah

SRMO, General Medicine,
Campbelltown Hospital





The eTOC web application is helping staff deliver better patient care through innovative technology

Electronic transfer of care (eTOC) improves patient outcomes in ICU

A first-of-its-kind innovation in Australia, the new Electronic Transfer of Care (eTOC) web-based application is a major step forward for hospital patients and staff, speeding up clinical information sharing between different systems.

The move from the intensive care unit (ICU) to other wards is a critical point in a patient's hospital stay. Ensuring continuity of a patient's care when changing location is incredibly important. It is essential that their medical records, treatment plans and medication details follow with them.

"Patient safety will be improved by reducing the chance of manual transcription errors. eTOC will also save clinician's from manually searching each system, which will result in faster transfers for patients between ICU and wards," said eRIC Program Director, Christopher Edwards.



Until now, this transition has been a manual process. Medical information is physically transcribed between systems in ICU and general wards. It's a time-consuming, inefficient process taking doctors away from the bedside.

According to Dr Nhi Nguyen, Department of Intensive Care, Nepean Hospital, "doctors spend a lot of time transcribing medication orders when patients are discharged from intensive care. eTOC will streamline this, reducing the potential for medication errors, improve clinician experience transitioning patients between the eRIC and Cerner eMR and having a positive impact on patient flow."

"The eTOC application digitally transfers medication orders from the electronic record for intensive care (eRIC) to Cerner electronic medical record (eMR) systems in NSW public hospitals" explains eRIC Program Director, Christopher Edwards.

"The medication catalogues and prescribing processes built in the two systems are incredibly complex technically. The medications are the same but there's no standard way of representing the information. The smarts behind eTOC are in its matching capabilities. It's building the technology bridge between our ICUs and general wards."

Clinicians first used the eTOC solution to discharge a patient from Wyong Hospital ICU back in February. Since then, Gosford, Royal North Shore and Hornsby Hospitals have also been given access to the system.

Clinician feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and the eTOC team is working on bringing eTOC to more ICU clinicians across NSW Health this year.

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Dr Nhi Nguyen

Department of Intensive Care,
Nepean Hospital





Self-managed cloud solution improves the delivery of patient care

eHealth NSW has overcome the challenges of adopting multi-cloud services and infrastructure by designing a cloud solution that specifically meets the needs of NSW Health, in turn helping the delivery of improved patient care.

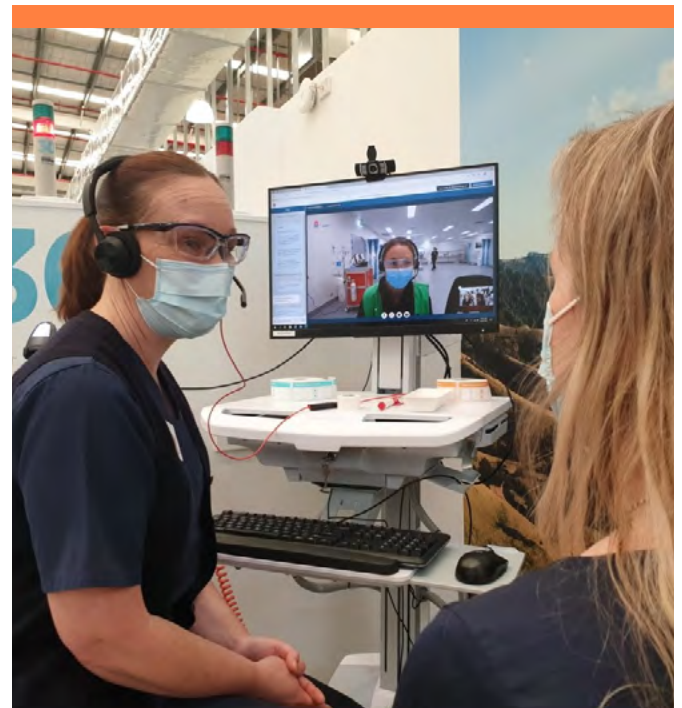
Built as a single, consistent, easy to use, self-managed cloud solution, it is part of a broader infrastructure refresh program, which includes hardware upgrades for critical systems, supported by eHealth NSW.

Cloud-based infrastructure offerings form part of the eHealth Strategy for NSW Health and will result in significant benefits for the public health system, clinicians and patients, by allowing for the scaling up and down of data requirements, more quickly and more securely.

Shifting to the cloud also means a move away from traditional bricks-and-mortar data solutions. These 'on-premise' offerings are expensive to maintain and require continual management of physical infrastructure. Cloud hosting is more cost effective.

The perfect example lies in myVirtualCare, ramped up at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, quickly, and in response to demand, using the cloud. It's just one of several critical systems that have already been moved across to the new technology.

Provided by Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure, along with eHealth NSW (via a self-managed cloud product), the combination of solutions ensures a safe, secure and reliable platform for NSW Health.



myVirtualCare demonstrates how the cloud delivers improved patient care

The system allows for less focus on technology provision, helping make sure services are tailored to meet the needs of patients and clinicians. It will also be used to provide several internal NSW Health functions, including the My Health Learning training platform.

In the future, more systems and applications will be migrated from on-premise to the cloud, including those operated at the Local Health District level. eHealth NSW is supporting Districts to move their systems and applications.

The self-managed cloud solution has already enabled eHealth NSW to scale ICT in a way that is responsive to the rapidly changing needs of NSW Health. It also underpinned the virtual response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by facilitating virtual care and remote working.

Cloud services continue to reduce operational costs, provide opportunities for operational efficiency and optimisation, and deliver the ability to leverage new capabilities and innovate with new technologies, without needing to build them from the ground up.



eHealth NSW continues to support women in tech

As a health organisation that specialises in information technology, eHealth NSW experiences many of the same challenges as other ICT organisations regarding female representation in its workforce. The eHealth NSW Gender Equality Action Plan is making great progress in creating opportunities for women to leverage existing skills, develop new capabilities and build stronger networks.

Launched in 2018, the Gender Equality Action Plan seeks to attract, internally grow, and develop women in senior management and leadership roles across eHealth NSW. Central to the plan is access to development programs and networking opportunities.

The eHealth NSW Women's Development Series, run in partnership with UGM Consulting, was launched in November 2018 and has two programs – one to build foundational leadership skills and the other to build senior and executive leadership skills – enabling women to build skills at different stages of their career journeys.

As part of the Series, participants in both programs are asked to establish a Community of Practice (CoP). Participants in the pilot program, elected to establish a permanent eHealth NSW Women's Leadership Community of Practice (WLCOP). The CoP is open to all women and provides a network to empower women to grow, inspire, influence and lead.

The WLCOP is leading a Women's Mentoring Program and a Networking Program, supported by working groups. As part of the mentoring program, drop-in mentoring sessions have been offered, as well as informal 1:1 coffee mentoring sessions. A formal mentoring program is set to launch this month, with 17 mentors and 17 mentees. As part of the networking program, two to three networking events are run each month, with excellent feedback and a net promoter score between 63 and 80.

In March, the WLCOP worked with representatives from across eHealth NSW to mark International Women's Day (IWD). This year's event celebrated the United Nations theme of Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.

It acknowledged the significant efforts of women and girls in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a wide range of presenters, including Jill Ludford, Chief Executive, Murrumbidgee Local Health District, who delivered the keynote address.



eHealth NSW staff and guests gathered to celebrate International Women's Day

Jill spoke about the impact COVID-19 and bushfires had on her leadership, professional and personal life – and the Murrumbidgee LHD, staff and local community. Other presenters included Aunty Ann Weldon, a proud Wiradjuri woman and Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council board member; Dr Margaret Byrne, a researcher, executive development coach and change management expert; Claire Barber, Women's Resilience Centre director and CEO of Mary's House Services; and barrister and former Victorian crown prosecutor Sharn Coombes.

COVID-19 has exacerbated many, if not all, of the gender disparities that already existed within societies across the globe and women have disproportionately been affected. In Australia, many of our frontline healthcare and support workers, and leaders, are women and have been at the forefront of navigating our response to the pandemic.

As a result of the pandemic, the delivery of mentoring and networking initiatives and the Women's Development Series has gone virtual. Expressions of Interest will soon be sought for the next cohort of the Women's Development Series. For further information please contact EHNSW-PeopleAndCulture@health.nsw.gov.au