



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

Media Release
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Newcastle First in Australia to Benefit from e-health Records

Federal Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson MP, today welcomed an announcement by the Gillard Government that Newcastle will be one of the first places in Australia to benefit from the use of electronic health records.

Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Nicola Roxon MP, announced today that our local GP Access would join two other GP networks (located in Queensland and Victoria) as Australia's first ever e-health sites.

"This is wonderful news for GP Access and for the people of Newcastle, Maitland and Lake Macquarie," said Ms Grierson.

"It is an important step forward in allowing individual online access to health records.

"Following the unfortunate closure of the Lambton Family Medical Centre earlier this year, I worked in conjunction with GP Access to advocate strongly for individual control of medical records.

"With this announcement, we will be one of the first regions in Australia where patients will be able to manage their own records and control access to their information.

"This demonstrates that the Gillard Government has listened, that it understands the situation and that it is working to find a solution for the people of Newcastle.

"GP Access and the Gillard Government will now take our local health care system into the 21st Century, by building an electronic health record system that improves patient care and the safety and efficiency of the health system."

GP Access was chosen because of its strong e-health capability and its support within the local community.

In addition to e-health records, GP Access will use health care identifiers for patients, providers and hospitals, and will be the first to electronically send discharge summaries and referrals using national specifications.

It will help lead
developing and

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the way in
informing future



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planning of the system, improving technology and identifying what works well and what could work better. The two year investment in the three sites will be up to \$12.5 million in total.

The NSW Government has also committed \$1.2 million to support the initiative and will work with the National E-Health Transition Authority to integrate their Healthelink pilot program with the national rollout.

The e-health system will also benefit from the roll out of the National Broadband Network.

In contrast, Tony Abbott will scrap \$467 million of funding provided by the Government in the most recent budget for e-health.

The President of the AMA, Dr Andrew Pesce recently said *"e-health is one major investment which isn't a cost, it's a cost saver if we invest it wisely."* (National Press Club 21 July 2010)

A Gillard Labor Government will use e-health to further its work to deliver improved health services in Australia.

"It's good to see Newcastle's GP Access leading the way in patient care and patient control of records," said Ms Grierson.

"I'm committed to working with GP Access to ensure the success of this pilot program and to ensure the best outcomes for patient care."

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