

Right information,
right place, right time.

nehta





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What is the Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service?

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The federal, state and territory governments have developed a national HI Service which will uniquely identify healthcare providers and individuals who seek healthcare. Medicare Australia is the operator of the HI Service.

Why do we need healthcare identifiers?

The HI Service will give individuals and healthcare providers confidence that the right health information is associated with the right individual at the point of care.

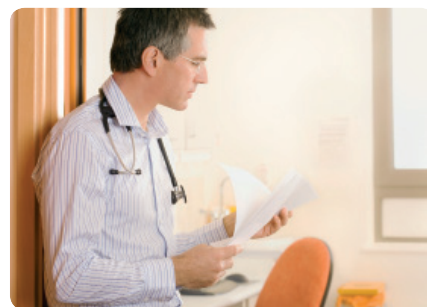
This is achieved with the allocation of a unique number (healthcare identifier) to individuals and healthcare providers. These numbers can be added to paper and electronic medical information and will clearly identify everyone involved in the patient's care, including the place where healthcare is received.

The HI Service allocates three types of healthcare identifiers:

- Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI)—allocated to all individuals enrolled in the Medicare program or those who are issued with a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) treatment card and others who seek healthcare in Australia.

- Healthcare Provider Identifier—Individual (HPI-I)—allocated to healthcare providers involved in providing patient care.
- Healthcare Provider Identifier—Organisation (HPI-O)—allocated to organisations that deliver healthcare (such as hospitals and medical practices).

Healthcare identifiers have been created to be used by healthcare providers to improve the security and efficient management of patients' health information.



HPI-I
Healthcare Provider Identifier-Individual

IHI
Individual Healthcare Identifier

HPI-O
Healthcare Provider Identifier-Organisation

Who provided the service

Who received the service

Where the service was provided

Healthcare event

Why are healthcare identifiers being implemented on a national basis?

Healthcare identifiers are part of the core infrastructure needed to support secure electronic communication across Australia's healthcare system. Without this infrastructure, our existing health networks and technologies have a limited capacity to talk to each other which could be expensive and difficult to resolve in the future. Healthcare identifiers are one of the foundations of a national eHealth system.

Why not use existing Medicare card numbers for individuals?

Some people have more than one Medicare card number because they are on multiple cards. Also, not everyone receiving healthcare in Australia is entitled to have a Medicare card, such as some visitors to Australia.

Healthcare identifiers do not replace Medicare or DVA numbers and do not affect the way medical benefits are claimed.

Why not use existing Medicare provider numbers for healthcare providers?

Healthcare providers may have multiple provider numbers or may not have a Medicare provider number at all. Some healthcare providers may not be eligible to bill Medicare. As such, it is essential for healthcare providers to have a healthcare identifier.



*The HI Service will
uniquely identify
healthcare providers
and individuals*

How will healthcare providers access the HI Service?



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Many healthcare providers will only start using healthcare identifiers when their practice management software has been updated to connect to the HI Service. This will allow healthcare providers access to healthcare identifiers as part of their normal workflows.

How does the HI Service work?

Healthcare provider organisations can obtain an individual's IHI from the HI Service and record it in their patient management software. Once they have included the IHI in their system, it can be attached to the demographic and clinical information stored within that system.

In order for a patient's IHI to be disclosed by the HI Service, a healthcare provider will need to provide sufficient identifying information to uniquely identify the individual. This may include a name, Medicare card number or DVA file number and date of birth. The HI Service will only release an IHI where there is an exact match.



Healthcare providers will need to integrate their practice management software with the HI Service web service interface.

Who will be eligible for an HPI-I?



A range of healthcare providers, including those in primary care and allied health, may be issued with an HPI-I.

There are two classes of individual healthcare providers who will be eligible to be issued with an HPI-I:

- healthcare providers registered under state, territory or a national law; or
- healthcare providers who are members of a professional association that meets certain criteria.

How do I apply for an HPI-I?

Healthcare providers registered under national law with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) would have received a letter from AHPRA which included HPI-I details.

Healthcare providers not registered under a state, territory or national law can obtain their HPI-I by sending a completed application form to Medicare Australia.

Why do individual healthcare providers need an HPI-I?

An HPI-I provides a unique way of identifying the provider on patient records that the provider creates or updates. When clinical information is sent electronically to other providers to support a patient's ongoing healthcare, the HPI-I, in combination with secure authentication mechanisms, will provide greater certainty about who has provided the information.

Do I need more than one HPI-I?

Healthcare providers will only need one HPI-I, regardless of the number of professions for which they are qualified or the number of healthcare organisations for which they work. A provider's HPI-I will be unique to that professional.

An HPI-I is needed, in combination with an HPI-O to participate in the HI Service

Who will be eligible for an HPI-O?

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Organisations can apply directly to the HI Service via Medicare Australia. Organisations need to meet the following requirements to be eligible for an HPI-O.

- provides a healthcare service;
- is a legal entity;
- employs or contracts one or more individual healthcare provider or sole trader who is employed for the purpose of providing a health service.

An HPI-O may be linked to all relevant HPI-I numbers in your organisation.



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What are the benefits of the HI Service?

The HI Service will give individuals and healthcare providers confidence that the right health information is associated with the right individual at the point of care.

Presently, the costs of adverse events and medical errors are significant. It has been estimated that:

- up to 10 per cent of hospital admissions are due to adverse drug events¹;
- up to 18 per cent of medical errors are due to the inadequate availability of patient information¹;
- lack of information sharing and care management for chronic disease sufferers costs the healthcare system \$1.5 billion a year²;
- collecting information consumes around 25 per cent of the average clinician's time which would be better spent treating patients³.

Healthcare Provider Directory

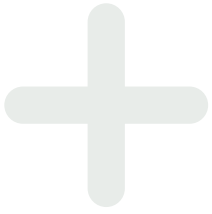
Healthcare identifiers improve existing methods of communication between healthcare providers. A Healthcare Provider Directory will allow those providers who choose to be listed in the directory to locate other providers (such as specialists) in a timely manner, and facilitate communication with other providers when referring patients or making decisions about the patient's care needs.



Confidence that the right health information is associated with the right individual at the point of care



1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Health 2002.
2. Michael Georgeff, Director of eHealth research, Monash University, "Technology stalls as worry over confidentiality grows," West Australian 11 November 2009.
3. For Your Information, Australian Audit Commission, Canberra, 1995.



*Only authorised
users are permitted
to access the
HI Service*

How is patient information protected?

There are legally defined limits on the adoption, use and disclosure of healthcare identifiers. As set out in the *Healthcare Identifier Act 2010*, a healthcare provider is authorised to use a healthcare identifier, or to disclose a healthcare identifier to an entity if:

- a the purpose of the use or disclosure is to communicate or manage health information as part of:
 - i the provision of healthcare to a healthcare recipient; or
 - ii the management (including the investigation or resolution of complaints), funding, monitoring or evaluation of healthcare; or
 - iii the provision of indemnity cover for a healthcare provider; or
 - iv the conduct of research that has been approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee; or
- b the healthcare provider reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent:
 - i a serious threat to an individual's life, health or safety; or
 - ii a serious threat to public health or public safety.

The Healthcare Identifier Act 2010 does not authorise the use or disclosure of the healthcare identifier of a healthcare recipient for the purpose of communicating or managing health information as part of:

- underwriting a contract of insurance that covers the healthcare recipient; or
- determining whether to enter into a contract of insurance that covers the healthcare recipient (whether alone or as a member of a class); or
- determining whether a contract of insurance covers the healthcare recipient in relation to a particular event; or
- employing the healthcare recipient.

The HI Service protects the confidentiality and privacy of patient demographics held by the service by a robust combination of technology controls, specific controls set out in the *Healthcare Identifier Act 2010* and its supporting regulations, and Australia's existing privacy laws.

The *Healthcare Identifier Act 2010* only authorises the use and disclosure of healthcare identifiers.

Use and disclosure of health information remains governed by the *Privacy Act 1988* and relevant state and territory legislation.

There are legally defined limits on the adoption, use and disclosure of healthcare identifiers



The combination of technology controls, specific controls set out in healthcare identifiers legislation and supporting regulations and existing privacy laws will provide strong privacy protections.



Is a healthcare identifier a health record?

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A healthcare identifier is not a health record. The information held by the HI Service Operator is limited to demographic information (such as name, date of birth and sex), which is needed to uniquely identify individuals and providers.



Healthcare identifiers have been designed as a foundation element for future eHealth initiatives, including a personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR) system announced in the 2010 Budget. Providers who update their systems to accommodate healthcare identifiers are taking an essential first step to prepare for future eHealth developments.

The national PCEHR system will be separate from the HI Service. The PCEHR will use healthcare identifiers to facilitate the identification of a consumer and healthcare provider. This will provide consumers and their healthcare providers with greater certainty that the individual's information is being correctly attributed to their electronic record.

Consistent with the National eHealth Strategy, endorsed by all Health Ministers, participation in a PCEHR will be voluntary and an individual will be required to have an IHI before they can register for a PCEHR.

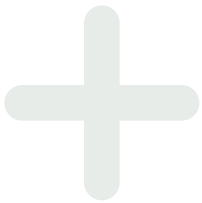


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Acronyms

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AHPRA	Australian Healthcare Practitioner Registration Authority
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
HI	Healthcare identifiers
HPI-I	Healthcare Provider Identifier - Individual
HPI-O	Healthcare Provider Identifier - Organisation
HPOS	Health Professional Online Service
IHI	Individual Healthcare Identifier
GPs	General Practitioners
NEHTA	National E-Health Transition Authority
PCEHR	Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure



Information

For more information about the HI Service visit:

www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

Email healthcareidentifiers@medicareaustralia.gov.au

Call 1300 361 457

To find out more about eHealth visit:

www.yourhealth.gov.au

www.ehealthinfo.gov.au

www.nehta.gov.au

