

POSITION STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2007



INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND eHEALTH IN GENERAL PRACTICE

General Practice Tasmania is committed to supporting the delivery of high quality, safe and integrated primary health care services to Tasmanian communities and believes effective information management and eHealth are critical to achieving this.

Evidence shows that service efficiency, quality, safety and health outcomes will be significantly improved through the establishment of an integrated health network underpinned by effective information management and information technology reforms across the entire health sector.

The timely, accurate, consistent and secure exchange of information relevant to the care of patients between general practice and other health care providers is fundamental to the development of an integrated health network.

General Practice Tasmania believes the uptake of information management and eHealth solutions in general practice will be supported by initiatives that:

- build on the lessons learnt from eHealth trials and programs and demonstrate that the critical issues highlighted in these have been addressed;
- address key needs of general practice and build support for further initiatives;
- offer the capacity for enhanced patient care through timely access to accurate and reliable records that can be appropriately shared between different providers;
- support improved health needs assessment and planning through utilisation of quality population health information at local, state and national levels;
- guarantee an environment where the security and confidentiality of patient and business information will continue to be paramount;
- be implemented within an agreed, standards-based and overarching information management and eHealth interoperability framework;
- provide appropriately resourced opportunities for general practice involvement in planning and implementation;
- adopt a pragmatic, step-by-step, change management strategy to build capacity in line with existing capabilities;
- be cost effective in time and resource allocation - there needs to be a clear business case for any eHealth initiative;
- recognise the current technical capability of general practice and be implemented in such a way as to fit with the evolution of clinical and practice management systems; and
- fit within the context of an agreed broader eHealth agenda for Tasmania and where appropriate integrate with other initiatives in this landscape.

The General Practice Tasmania network is a unique statewide infrastructure that supports contemporary general practice in Tasmania by linking GPs with each other, by supporting all members of the general practice team and, increasingly, by employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team. General Practice Tasmania is also a proud member of the Australian General Practice Network.

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The General Practice Tasmania Network has developed position statements on various issues relevant to the operation of the health services system and relating to general practice across the State. These position statements reflect the views of Tasmanian GPs and the primary care community.

Each position statement is based upon research and the analysis of relevant literature as well as an assessment of the broader health sector environment. The position statements are developed collaboratively between the State Based Organisation, the three Divisions of General Practice and the Workforce Support Agency within Tasmania. During the development of each statement the Divisions and Workforce Agency consult with their Tasmanian GP members and Boards respectively. Prior to release the statements are ratified by the Boards of each of the organisations that constitute the General Practice Tasmania Network.

Collaboration with other general practice organisations (eg General Practice Training Tasmania, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, etc) is also a feature in the development of some position statements. The co-endorsement of position statements maximises the effectiveness of these statements and represents a strong collective view.

It is expected that position statements will evolve to reflect the ever-changing health and general practice environment. Accordingly feedback and comment is invited to ensure that the position statements continue to be relevant and accurately reflect the views of the Tasmanian general practice and primary care community.

To provide feedback on any position statement please contact any of the organisations that constitute the General Practice Tasmania Network:



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