Ladies and gentlemen

As I write in the foreword to the *Blueprint for eHealth in NSW*, which I am launching today:

“Back in April 2010, as Shadow Health Minister, I told a gathering of technology specialists I believed Information and Communication Technology will play a crucial role in improving the future healthcare of the people of NSW.”

Not only do I remain totally committed to that view, I’m proud of the advances we have made over the last two and a half years, culminating in the release today of the *Blueprint for eHealth in NSW*, which outlines our plans for the future.

Let me reflect on where we have come so far.

When we restructured the NSW health system back in 2011, we developed a whole-of-health approach to eHealth.

We have continued to build eHealth capacity and connectivity and are developing:

- New clinical care initiatives such as introduction of community health and outpatient care to integrate clinical and electronic record systems, upgrading Electronic Medical Records, adding voice recognition capacity, electronic medication management and Intensive Care Clinical Information System

- New business solutions, which include rostering, Incident Information Management Systems and Asset and Facilities Management Performance

- Infrastructure upgrades, such as boosting broadband capacity in the country.

We have focused on clinical care - putting patients first when rolling out critical clinical eHealth systems which include:

- Electronic Medical Records - covers 142 of our hospitals or 80% of our bed base, allowing doctors to order tests, schedule surgery and prepare electronic discharge summaries. Every day in NSW, over 23,000 clinicians log-on and open 212,000 charts, order 136,000 tests and book 17,000 appointments electronically.

- Medical imaging - with NSW now leading Australia through a system which digitises and stores radiology images to allow rapid access for clinicians across sites.
And my favourite development:

- HealtheNet, which is being trialled in Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains LHDs and the Children's Hospital Network. This is the system NSW Health has developed to connect our public hospital and community services electronic medical records with the National eHealth Record (known as the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record). HealtheNet allows public hospital clinicians to view the following patient records from other sources on the patient's PCEHR, such as:
  - Electronic discharge summaries from private hospitals
  - GP and specialist e-referrals
  - GP shared health summaries
  - Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme information
  - Australian Organ Donor Register information
  - Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
  - Medicare Benefits Schedule procedural information
  - Medicare/Department of Veterans' Affairs benefits information
  - Advanced Care Directive records

This is an important step in supporting integrated care for patients with complex and chronic conditions that require care by multiple clinicians across a range of settings. It is typical of the approach we are adopting as we develop eHealth further through the themes:

- Adopting federated collaborative governance arrangements across NSW Health
- Improved stakeholder engagement
- Centralised/localised planning balance
- Broader capacity building
- State-wide ICT integration

These themes form the basis of the *Blueprint for eHealth in NSW* for the next five years.

Firstly, the *Blueprint* formalises the establishment of eHealth NSW, which will be a separate organisation to HealthShare NSW and will become the system leader for NSW Health’s information strategy, forward planning and delivery.

I look forward to the appointment of eHealth NSW’s first chief executive by April.

eHealth NSW will retain a close relationship with HealthShare NSW. HealthShare NSW will continue to provide corporate services such as finance, communications, procurement, customer service management and workforce services, while eHealth NSW will provide ICT services.

eHealth NSW encompasses a number of innovative programs already underway across the state that support new models of care.

These include telehealth, electronic medications management, state-wide access to digital imaging and the use of voice recognition software as part of the second phase of the electronic medical records program.
There is also a real need to accelerate the maturity and use of eHealth in rural and remote NSW, and so we will implement a strategy which sets out a new approach to the delivery and support of ICT infrastructure.

The *Blueprint* for eHealth in NSW also provides a framework for greater collaboration between the NSW Ministry for Health, our Local Health Districts and eHealth NSW, while at the same time ensuring active clinician involvement and leadership in decision-making at the local level.

The *Blueprint* also provides for the appointment of a Chief Clinical Information Officer, aimed at ensuring strong clinician engagement and support in every program that we design and roll-out across the state’s hospitals and healthcare settings.

The *NSW Health Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan* will also be refreshed to reflect these changes and guide our work over the next five-year period.

The plan will tie our ICT program directly to benefits for clinicians, patients and the NSW Health system and will include clear measures to monitor performance and progress.

Importantly, it will outline our future strategy, enabling us to fill in the gaps that currently exist in areas such as medication management and community health.

The release today of this *Blueprint* for eHealth in NSW is a significant milestone in our goal to ensure NSW continues to be the nation’s leader in health information technology.

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