

Wednesday, 28 October 2009

Electronic Medical Record providing safer care in our public hospitals

The Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Carmel Tebbutt, today announced that hospitals in the Greater Western Area Health Service (AHS) were preparing to roll out an Electronic Medical Record (eMR) system to assist clinicians and provide safer care for patients.

“There are many advantages in the switch to electronic records,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“An eMR system will allow clinicians fast access to patient information, notify them of alerts and whether a patient has an allergy and will reduce paperwork to give nurses and doctors more time with patients.

“It will also reduce illegible handwriting on paper record and provide prompts for safer care as well as better coordination of resources such as operating theatre time. Patient privacy has been a major consideration and strict protections are in place.”

Ms Tebbutt said the new eMR system would support many of the recommendations of the Garling Report and the Government’s response in *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan* addressing quality and safety issues. The move to electronic medical records is a statewide initiative.

“This is the first step in improving and modernising documentation across the Greater Western AHS,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“It will lead to the gradual replacement of paper documentation initially in Emergency Departments and Operating Theatres.”

Doctors, nurses and allied health staff are already involved in helping to build and test a system suited to rural needs. They have identified many benefits of the new system which is already in place at other areas across NSW.

Dr Mark Byrne and Nurse Unit Manager Briana Bartley from Broken Hill Emergency Department recently visited several NSW sites where the system has been already implemented and were impressed with what they saw.

“eMR has revolutionised emergency medicine in many sites throughout NSW. It’s a paperless system in which everything is computerised including note taking, pathology and X-ray ordering,” said Dr Byrne.

“Nurse Unit Manager Brianna Bartley and I visited four sites in Sydney and Wollongong to have a first hand experience on how the system is utilised and how we can best implement the system in our department.

“The system does require all staff to be trained but the long term benefits of a paperless system for access to patient histories, legibility and safety is worth the investment,” said Dr Byrne.

Carmel Tebbutt MP

Deputy Premier | Minister for Health



The system is being initially rolled out in Broken Hill, Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange and Mudgee.

