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Minister for Health
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MEDIA RELEASE

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FUTURE BRIGHT FOR eHEALTH IN NSW

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today released the *Blueprint for eHealth in NSW* which will drive further development of and investment in digital health technologies across the state.

Addressing guests at the Parliament House launch, Mrs Skinner said the blueprint formalises the establishment of eHealth NSW. The inaugural chief executive of eHealth NSW will be appointed by April. A Chief Clinical Information Officer will also be appointed to engage clinicians on eHealth.

"The NSW Liberal & Nationals Government understands that a modern health care system must harness the power of eHealth, which can deliver services more efficiently, overcoming challenges such as geography," Mrs Skinner said.

"Through our commitment to eHealth, we have developed the most advanced electronic medical records system in Australia. And we have developed a patient portal to track patient through our hospitals.

"These are just two of the ways in which NSW is leading the way in eHealth. This blueprint is the next step, guiding the way for future development."

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Government has earmarked $1.5 billion for eHealth NSW over the next 10 years. This includes almost $400 million on ICT programs, including electronic medications management and community health and outpatients care.

"eHealth NSW has enormous potential to transform healthcare delivery, whether by using digital and online technologies to assist the management of critically-ill patients in intensive care units or by reducing the need for patients to travel by providing personal eHealth records, tele-health and home monitoring," Mrs Skinner said.

"The NSW health system boasts one of the largest Information Communications Technology (ICT) portfolios of any agency or corporation in the nation," Mrs Skinner said.

"By supporting our clinicians and Local Health Districts in being actively involved in the implementation of hospital IT systems we can ensure our efforts truly address the areas of greatest patient need," Mrs Skinner said.

The Blueprint for eHealth in NSW clearly outlines a framework for enhanced collaboration between eHealth NSW, the NSW Ministry of Health and the Local Health Districts.

"The *Blueprint for eHealth in NSW* will guide us in delivering smarter, safer healthcare. It also gives us the capacity, flexibility and expertise to embrace innovative technology for the benefit of patients long into the future," Mrs Skinner said.

This will include development of a strategy for rural and remote districts, which will set out a new approach to the delivery and support of ICT infrastructure, including the challenges around access to specialist technical skills, alignment with rural workforce requirements and ease of access.

Successful eHealth programs underway in NSW include:

- **Electronic Medical Records (eMR):** This system replaces paper records, creating greater functionality and portability. In NSW, 142 hospitals - or 80% of the bed base - have eMR capability, allowing them to order tests, schedule surgery and prepare electronic discharge summaries. On any given day in NSW, 23,000 clinicians log on and open 212,000 charts, order 136,000 tests and book 17,000 appointments electronically.

- **HealtheNet:** A system for sharing electronic health records between public hospitals and GPs is now in place across four Local Health Districts and the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. This allows clinicians to access information including state-wide electronic medical records, Personally Controlled Electronic Health Records, immunisation, pathology, radiology records and hospital discharge summaries. Over 1 million clinical documents have been stored in the HealtheNet since it went live in August 2012.

- **Medical imaging:** The Enterprise Imaging Repository (EIR) is currently operating in some Local Health Districts and will be live in all districts by February 2014. It allows the sharing of medical imaging across the state.

- **Electronic Medication Management (eMM):** Work is continuing on an electronic system to help support doctors, nurses and pharmacists record, prescribe, order, check, reconcile, dispense and administer medicines. It will link with the Electronic Medical Records (eMR) system so clinicians can manage a patient's care with the support of computers rather than paper records.

- **Telehealth:** NSW Health has increased bandwidth and capacity to enable the sharing of medical information and consultations between regional and rural and metropolitan hospitals and clinicians.

- **Voice recognition:** Almost 500 clinicians across the state are now using voice recognition software.

For further information about *A Blueprint for eHealth in NSW* visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/eHealth