

5 March 2020

### Emerald takes gold for digital health technology

The Central Queensland town of Emerald has been revealed to be the first in the state, and one of the first in Australia, to have widespread digital connectivity across the health sector.

There are more than 16,000 health organisations across the country, from general practice and community pharmacy to pathology and aged care, connected with and using My Health Record, a secure online summary of patient's health information.

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN My Health Record Coordinator Abbey Notley said Emerald will be one of the first across the country to have all healthcare providers view and actively upload clinical information to the system.

"We're delighted Emerald is among the first to completely embrace this digital health initiative, it's a great example of how medical practitioners can empower patients to keep a track of their medical history and engage with their own health," Ms Notley said.

Buoyed by that clinical and community support, health practitioners in Emerald are now joining forces to form a Community of Excellence, with the aim of improving health outcomes for local residents through better care coordination and provider connectivity, as well as access to digital health services.

Dr Ewen McPhee, the Chair of the Emerald Community of Excellence and a well-known local general practitioner, said having access to patient information via software like My Health Record is critical to making good decisions about care.

"Often people see a number of clinicians during their health journey and it's really important that those clinicians are able to share their impressions and care planning so that the whole team are pulling in the same direction," Dr McPhee said.

"As a GP I rely on the My Health Record to find out about what has happened when people go to Hospital since all Queensland Hospitals share their tests, investigations and discharge summaries on My Health Record.

"Medication safety is another important part of good care and an up to date medication list can be life-saving as it reduces errors and improves awareness of adverse reactions.

"I often ask people if they will allow me to upload their consultation notes to their My Health Record and there has been a high level of acceptance as it allows people to review and engage in their care.

"For families with little kids, parents find having their own summary of the immunisations given very useful."

Central Queensland Rural Health CEO Sandra Corfield said clinicians and patients alike in the town of more than 14,000 have shown a real willingness to adopt these digital health technologies.

"Digital technology in all its forms offers connection for rural patients," Ms Corfield said.

"Emerald's clinicians are keen to develop the available technology and use it to the maximum benefit of their patients.

"It's a large-enough centre to have a variety of local and visiting services who will all work together to support their patients."

More details about the Emerald Community of Excellence will be discussed at the Central Queensland Rural Health Weekend 14-15 March 2020.

Dr Ewen McPhee and Sandra Corfield are available for interview.

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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