

ANU Media Release

News from The Australian National University

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E-HEALTH CRITICAL TO HEALTH REFORM: EXPERT

A Scottish e-health expert who is visiting the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute based at The Australian National University has applauded the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission report's recommendations for a national e-health strategy.

Professor Frank Sullivan, director of the Scottish School of Primary Care, said electronic health records would enhance the quality and safety of care to patients, and assist policy makers and researchers by allowing information sharing.

The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission report recommends the introduction of personal electronic health records, which would improve patient outcomes, reduce waste and inefficiency, and improve continuity of care.

Professor Sullivan supported in particular the report's recommendation that the Commonwealth Government legislate to ensure the privacy and security of a person's electronic health data.

"Concerns about confidentiality and patients' privacy will not go away, and I'm glad to see the Commonwealth Government plans to consult the public and health professionals," Professor Sullivan said.

"In Scotland, we are already beginning to see the benefits to patient care from sharing data throughout the health system over the past decade."

Professor Sullivan added that he welcomed the report's emphasis on shared data standards and the ability to exchange information between different computer systems.

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) sponsored Professor Sullivan's visit to Australia. APHCRI was established in 2003 to provide national leadership in improving the quality and effectiveness of primary health care through the conduct of high-quality, priority-driven research, and in supporting and promoting best practice.

Professor Sullivan is available for interview this afternoon.

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