

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

National e-Health Transition Authority (NeHTA)

Budget Estimates 2011-12, Supplementary Estimates

Question: 18

OUTCOME 10.2: e-Health

Topic: PCEHR

Senator Boyce asked:

Are NEHTA and DoHA aware of the US Institute of Medicine Report entitled "Health IT and Patient Safety: Building Safer Systems for Better Care?"

If so, how have NEHTA and DOHA ensured that the issues and specifically the risks of harm to patient care and safety have been fully addressed in the completed architecture of the PCEHR?

Answer:

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report is a useful gauge as to where eHealth is placed in Australia in comparison to efforts in the United States.

There are very highly valuable lessons to be learned for Australia from the recommendations contained in this report.

The NEHTA Clinical Governance Review Board has considered the IOM report and has found useful and thought provoking components in the recommendations, particularly relating to the governance of electronic health records and eHealth systems. However, beyond submissions to public consultations such as with the PCEHR Regulations and Rules, the consideration of PCEHR system governance is out of scope for NEHTA. The application of NEHTAs clinical management system points to a number of mitigating controls that are embodied in the IOM report at a high level.

As described in question one (1) above, to help support clinical safety assurance process, the clinical safety team have implemented a clinical safety management system – SENTRY. SENTRY provides a formal management system, policy and guidance for the clinical safety management of eHealth products and systems delivered by NEHTA into the Australian healthcare environment. The goal of SENTRY is to ensure that the residual clinical risk associated with NEHTA products and systems is as low as reasonably practicable. In addition to providing a Safety Case approach to Clinical Safety Management, SENTRY promotes an effective safety culture within NEHTA.

The NEHTA SENTRY Clinical Safety Management System has been licensed from BT Health who developed and use Sentry:

- in the NHS National Programme for Information Technology project in England;
 - as the Local Service Provider for the clusters of London and the South of England;
- and
- to deliver the national Spine database.

While there is some similarities to ISO based approaches to quality management, there are important differences in emphasis, approach and the application of clinical expertise to help identify and mitigate clinical safety risks.