

HepatitisSA

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Leading the South Australian community response to viral hepatitis

13 September 2019

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Letter of Support for Hepatitis Australia's submission on the My Health Records (Strengthening Privacy) Amendment Bill 2018

Hepatitis SA supports Hepatitis Australia's submission to the Senate Standing Committee on the My Health Records (Strengthening Privacy) Amendment Bill 2018, as it reflects the concerns expressed to us from people affected by viral hepatitis in South Australia in relation to the My Health Record system and the current implementation of the 'opt-out' option.

It would be fair to say that a significant number of people affected by highly stigmatised health conditions such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C already have little trust in the health system due to negative experiences they have had with healthcare providers. In the implementation of the 'opt-out' option, the lack of information communicated about the array of third party institutions which would also be able to access the personal health information of those with a My Health Record, only compounds this lack of trust in the health system, and government more generally.

Hepatitis SA is particularly concerned about the implementation of the 'opt-out' option in South Australian prisons, where, according to a representative from the South Australian Prison Health Services (SAPHS), prisoners were only given a 2 week period to access and complete the paper-based forms if they wanted to 'opt-out'.

Hepatitis SA strongly supports the 'opt-in' option to My Health Record, the greatest protection to an individual's privacy being the default setting for the My Health Record system, and much tighter controls on third party access to the personal health information of those who do 'opt-in', preferably 'informed consent' being required from individuals, for any third party wanting access to his/her personal health information.

A fundamental principle of healthcare is 'do no harm', and this should apply as much to the systems of delivery, as to an individual healthcare provider's practice. In its current form and implementation, the My Health Record system does not meet this principle.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Paterson
Executive Officer