

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-466

OUTCOME 10: Health System Capacity and Quality

Topic: EHEALTH - LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

Nicola Roxon has recently been attacking privacy advocates and their concerns about the security of the proposed PCEHR. But its Draft Legislation has just been released before the standards and technical specifications that form the basis of its function have been finalised.

It is argued by experts that the standards for health software should be the same as those for the aviation industry. Are NEHTA's standards comparable?

Answer:

The standards and specifications for the personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR) system are required to integrate safety and quality processes to cover the PCEHR when used in clinical settings. Each stage of the development process for the PCEHR technical specifications require clinical governance and safety processes to be addressed. This assurance process is undertaken through the National E-Health Transition Authority's (NEHTA) Clinical Safety Unit, which is fully embedded into all areas of NEHTA's product development and oversees PCEHR clinical governance requirements.

The specifications and standards for the PCEHR system have been drafted in parallel with the legislation and review processes have continually refined aspects which support the privacy and legislative intent.

It is inappropriate for the Department to comment on standards in other sectors.