

e-Health Position Statement

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

RDA-NR recognises that e-Health is both the essential infrastructure underpinning information exchange between all participants in our health care system as well as a key enabler and driver of improved health outcomes for all Australians.

RATIONALE

Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) is a non-profit community-based and regionally focused organisation that connects people and businesses in our region to opportunities through partnerships focusing on community, environment and economy.

RDA-NR recognises that if we are to continue to deliver high standards of health outcomes in the Northern Rivers our health sector faces a set of increasingly significant challenges. These include:

- significant differences between the health outcomes for advantaged and disadvantaged people who live in our region, particularly indigenous Australians;
- the large, and growing, ageing population of our region;
- a significant incidence of chronic diseases;
- an increased demand for more costly, complex and technologically advanced procedures; and
- the limited supply and distribution of skilled health sector workers.

e-Health provides the means to ensure that the right health information is provided to the right person at the right place and time in a secure, electronic form for the purpose of optimizing the quality and efficiency of health care delivery.

PRINCIPLES

This position statement reflects RDA-NR's belief that e-Health will be a fundamental platform in the delivery of health throughout the Northern Rivers. RDA-NR:

- recognises that access to appropriate and timely health service delivery is vital to maintain well-being;
- believes that health is a knowledge industry with information being central to all aspects of care planning, management and delivery, and that e-Health will ensure the right consumer health information is electronically available to the right person at the right place and time. This will enable informed care and treatment decisions and multi-disciplinary practitioners to communicate

electronically to exchange information and provide better coordinated health care across the continuum of care;

- acknowledges that electronic information exchange will improve the quality, safety and efficiency of clinical practices by giving care providers better access to health information, clinical evidence and clinical decision support tools for our residents;
- acknowledges that with electronic access to health information, residents of the Northern Rivers may better manage and control their personal health outcomes with confidence that their personal health information is managed in a secure, confidential and tightly controlled manner;
- advocates for inter-operability of all encryption software across the range of health practitioners and providers;
- supports informed policy, investment and research decisions through access to timely, accurate and comprehensive reporting on health system activities and outcomes within the Northern Rivers; and
- recognises that regional Australia is facing challenges in finding sufficient numbers of skilled health care workers across many parts of the sector to satisfy current as well as future, levels of demand and that e-Health can assist in the delivery of services to rural and remote communities throughout the Northern Rivers.

DEFINITIONS

e-Health has been defined by the World Health Organisation as *“the combined use of electronic communication and information technology in the health sector”*.

DATE OF ADOPTION

Version 1 adopted by Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers 9 December 2011

DATE OF REVIEW

December 2013