

## Media Release:

# Warnings: My Health Record risking young people's health

Friday 17 August 2018

Serious health and safety risks to young people from My Health Record are not being addressed, warn a coalition of nine leading community and health groups from across Australia.

### Young people may stop seeking help

- 'Young people may stop seeking health services for needs that are often stigmatised, such as mental health, sexual and reproductive health, substance use and gender diversity,' warns Maggie Toko, VMIAC CEO, 'because My Health Record will allow parents or guardians to view health information by default.'

### Lack of targeted information for young people

- 'My Health Record allows young people aged 14 to 18 years to take control of their own health record,' said Shauna Gaebler, CEO of CoMHWA, 'however available information is confusing and at times contradictory.'
- 'We are deeply concerned that there has been no targeted information to young people in Australia about My Health Record,' said Shauna Gaebler. 'Time is running out for young people to be able to make an informed decision about their use of My Health Record'.

### Call for action

The coalition has written to the CEO of Australian Digital Health Agency to seek answers and actions, but we have received no response. Our calls for action include:

- Suspension of the national rollout of My Health Record until protections for the privacy and safety of young people are adopted, including:
  - A clear process for young people to gain control of their record
  - Action to inform and support young people to understand the risks and make an informed choice regarding their use of My Health Record

### Summary of risks for young people

If young people are not informed about how to gain control of their My Health Record, risks include:

- Young people not knowing what health information is recorded and shared with providers and their parents/guardians
- Unwanted disclosure of information to parents or guardians, such as LGBTI status, mental health status, or sexual health information
- Use of information to cause harm, abuse or neglect, such as where a family violence or child abuse perpetrator has access to their health records
- Health inequalities for young people who may have lost contact with their parent or guardian, and who may lack the ability to access their own health records

The coalition calling for action includes: Consumers of Mental Health Services WA, Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council, Being (NSW), Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre WA, People with Disabilities WA, West Australian Association for Mental Health, Youth Affairs Council of WA, Youth Affairs Council VIC, Health Consumers Council WA.

-ends

---

### Media contact (Interviews are available)

Shauna Gaebler, CEO CoMHWA. Mobile: 0422 190 689, Ph: (08) 9258 8911, E: [ceo@comhwa.org.au](mailto:ceo@comhwa.org.au)