

Whole-of-system health performance information collection and reporting is needed that:

- focuses on health outcomes and information that matter most to patients; and
- facilitates achieving value in healthcare and accountability for performance.

Data must accurately reflect care outcomes and be in the right format, timely and of sufficient quality to discern critical relationships between investment and results.

Data must also be appropriately presented to cater for different audiences and purposes; and must be made available with appropriate governance for accountability, planning and research purposes.

The comprehensive reporting of national health information serves the following purposes:

- For the public - user-friendly and relevant statistical information informs individuals and communities, promotes transparency and supports research;
- At the point of care - it enables comparisons between and within service providers, thereby facilitating informed consumer choice and driving health service improvements;
- For jurisdictions - it informs policy and drives health system improvements; and
- For regions and service providers - it drives strategic directions and the allocation of funding and resources.

Despite the importance of health information and reporting and the substantial data currently being collected, Australia has not implemented a long-term strategic plan to coordinate and direct national health information interests. A national strategy is needed which brings together the information reporting components from various health agreements and initiatives, defines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and identifies future opportunities for development under a single coherent national health information framework.

Recognising the need for a comprehensive national approach, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is developing a National Health Information Strategy (NHIS). Broadly, the NHIS will aim to overcome information gaps and barriers in the current system, drive investments in health information and provide an enduring framework to achieve coordinated, integrated, efficient, effective and timely collection and development of health information.

The scope of the NHIS is expected to cover governance, infrastructure, national health data, and analysis and reporting.

AHHA POSITION

- ✧ AHHA welcomes the commitment to development of an enduring framework that will consolidate health information, promote cross-sector linkages, promote efficient, timely and consistent data collection and reporting, identify gaps and opportunities, and facilitate better whole-of-system patient-centred care.
- ✧ The NHIS must be future focused, moving beyond the collection of input and output measures, to the outcomes, value and affordability of treatments as reported by patients and health professionals.
- ✧ The NHIS will underpin the Australian Health Performance Framework and its associated indicators, and should inform further refinements of this Framework to ensure it remains relevant.
- ✧ Provision should be made for reporting on the social determinants of health, encompassing a strategy for linkage with data on income, employment, housing, education, and other relevant social, cultural and environmental determinants. This will inform the planning of appropriate health services.
- ✧ Reporting that uses consistent metadata, and standardised clinical terminologies and classifications, should be prioritised.
- ✧ The NHIS should outline a process through which a longitudinal understanding of an individual's healthcare journey can be constructed. This could be facilitated through My Health Record and a requirement for all providers to upload healthcare information, or the wider use of Individual Healthcare Identifiers.
- ✧ The NHIS should require more comprehensive data to be published on the use of the MBS and PBS at an individual and family level to inform our understanding of healthcare affordability and out-of-pocket costs, and the distribution of health services utilisation.
- ✧ A development pathway should be identified to expand MBS reporting beyond the current reporting by item numbers only.
- ✧ The NHIS should promote the collection and reporting of health information which enables a better understanding of the health needs of disadvantaged groups.
- ✧ The evolving opportunities and challenges of genomic data must be considered in the NHIS so it is fit for purpose now and into the future.
- ✧ The NHIS should require the mandatory provision from providers of specified data for health services that received public funding. It should also explore how to facilitate the collection of data on all non-publicly funded health services.
- ✧ While supporting the comprehensive curation of health information through the NHIS, the assurance of individual privacy cannot be compromised. Depending on the level of aggregated data being reported, this may require individual patient consent.