

## **HealthConnect under the microscope**

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MARCH 01, 2006 THE future of HealthConnect and concerns over the federal Government's fading commitment to the nationwide electronic health record program will be thrashed out tomorrow at a meeting of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council. Queensland Health has put HealthConnect on the agenda for discussion at the first AHMAC meeting since the Council of Australian Governments conference in February, where \$130 million of state and federal funding was awarded to the National E-Health Transition Authority.

State health officials say the future of HealthConnect as a national initiative is unclear, given the "expanding role of NeHTA in developing standards and infrastructure" to support a shared electronic health record (SEHR).

The absence of an implementation work plan for HealthConnect "indicates a lack of specific actions to achieve the outcomes of the current HealthConnect strategy", according to a discussion paper prepared for the meeting.

Instead, substantial amounts of HealthConnect activity have now been moved to NeHTA.

"Originally, the HealthConnect Business Architecture was essentially describing a shared e-health record (SEHR)," the paper says.

"This has been shifted to NeHTA, which is to develop a concept of operations for a SEHR by mid-2006. Likewise, NeHTA is now developing a range of information management elements, such as the consent model."

But while the development of SEHR architectural products by NeHTA was supported, "there is still no commitment for the development or funding" of a nationwide e-health record system.

Queensland Health is calling for a statement on the Federal Government's ongoing commitment to HealthConnect, and clarification of its plans for encouraging Medicare-funded health provider participation in the program.

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