



MEDIA STATEMENT

Health information peak bodies call for action to build workforce

Five peak Australian health information professional bodies have collaborated on a blueprint for action to prevent workforce shortages in critical health areas.

The group represents thousands of health information managers, health informaticians and others handling and managing health system information and patient data.

It says without urgent action to attract, retain and guide the health information professions, Australia will not have the required configuration in the workforce and - more critically- will experience shortages impacting the success of future digital health implementations.

The five organisations, who held a dedicated workforce peak summit late last year, are:

- Health Information Management Association of Australia (HIMAA)
- Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA)
- Australian Library and Information Association's Health Libraries Australia Group (ALIA HLA)
- Australasian College of Health Informatics (ACHI) and
- Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM)

They have called for industry and government support for the development of national capability frameworks.

The group has developed several key strategies to build digital capability amongst the health and information workforce:

- a census of the health information workforce and regular collection of data;
- national capability frameworks to detail the competencies needed by the health information professional workforce; and
- education and professional development opportunities, career pathways, and reward and recognition programs to ensure recruitment and retention.

Richard Lawrance, CEO of HIMAA said that "our goal is to raise the profile of the various health information professions across the health system and the critical role they have now and in the future if initiatives like the Government's MyHealth Record are to achieve success".

"We have high hopes for the Australian Digital Health Agency's national digital health strategy in terms of a practical focus on health information workforce, as action is needed now."

"Health information professionals need the right configuration in diversification specialisation and career pathways that will support the growing and emerging digital health environment.

"Moreover, for the integration of primary and tertiary care to be effective, the My Health Record's terminology software, e.g. SNOMED-CT, needs to interface with the clinical classification of care (ICD-10-AM) in the tertiary sector. Information technology interoperability alone is not enough.

“The University of Tasmania and University of Melbourne have already begun identification of a minimum Health Information Workforce data set under their own steam,” Mr Lawrance said, “But they will need much more support from Government to complete the job in a timely fashion.”

A one page summary of the HIW Peak Bodies’ 8-point action plan is available [HERE](#).

22 May 2017

Contact:

Richard Lawrance

Chief Executive Officer

Health Information Management Association of Australia Ltd

Ph. +61 2 9887 5903

Email: ceo@hima.org.au