



BUDGET 2009-2010 INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

MEDIA RELEASE

No. 8

\$90 million investment in an e-healthy future

A \$90 million investment in e-health capacity and infrastructure will take Canberra's health care system into the future, ACT Health Minister, Katy Gallagher, said today.

Announcing the funding allocation in the 2009-10 Budget, Ms Gallagher said initiatives like this would ensure our health system was better positioned to meet the needs of the ACT community now and into the next decade.

"We will continue to prioritise health and invest in services to meet growing demand and keep pace with new and innovative ways of delivering health care."

"Despite the challenging economic times, this Government will not withdraw from our obligations to the community and will continue to invest in health," Ms Gallagher said.

The benefits of e-health are increased efficiencies, quality, timeliness, safety and productivity of the system overall.

"New information and communication technologies are recognised as being key components in addressing and managing the increase in demand for health services and these initiatives are a significant commitment to meeting these challenges," Ms Gallagher said.

The Minister said the *E-Healthy Future* package delivered on a key 2008 election commitment and had four main elements:

Personal electronic health records

"Personal Electronic Health Records (PEHR) will ensure that accurate and trusted personal health information is made available to the right person, at the right time to enable informed care and treatment decisions, which is better for patients and consumers, as well as health professionals and providers.

Digital hospital and healthcare infrastructure

“The ACT Government’s commitment to a \$1 billion rebuild of our health system requires next generation digital infrastructure.

“This will require a medical grade secure network to enable safe, timely and reliable exchange of sensitive clinical information by health professionals and provider organisations.

“Remote diagnostic and treatment services to enable care to move seamlessly outside the hospital and clinic environment and into patients’ homes will be achieved through common clinical applications and high availability ICT infrastructure.

Decision support

“Decision support will guide the highly skilled work undertaken by our front line health workers – doctors, nurses and allied health professionals,” Ms Gallagher said.

“This will include electronic medication management (EMM) to ensure safe, accurate and timely prescribing and administration of medication, and online access to clinical protocols, guidelines and new medical research.

Support services

“Support services are the essential infrastructure components of e-health that make decision support, personal electronic health records and the digital environment possible,” Ms Gallagher said.

The Minister said an *E-Healthy Future* would enable patients to be put at the very centre of the health care system and support General Practitioners through the electronic sharing of patient clinical information between the hospital and the GP to improve patient safety.

“This considerable investment in e-health capacity will also provide patients with a much greater say in how their personal health information can be used to improve access to health care, reduce wasted time associated with current multiple disconnected paper-based and other systems, and above all improve the safety and quality of health care,” she said.

“It will also ensure that our service delivery is safer, more timely and efficient.”

5 May 2009

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