



Healthcare Identifiers – Preparing Your Practice

From 1 July 2012 members of the public will be able to apply for their Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR). Now is the time for practices to start preparing for the time when patients will arrive requesting their PCEHR.

An important building block for the PCEHR system is the national Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service which helps to identify people and organisations involved in healthcare across Australia through the allocation of a unique number (healthcare identifier) to each individuals and healthcare provider. The HI Service which is operated by Medicare Australia will give individuals and healthcare providers confidence that the right health information is associated with the right individual at the point of care.

The HI Service allocates three types of Healthcare Identifiers:

1. Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI)

The IHI is a 16 digit number allocated to all individuals enrolled in the Medicare program or those who are issued with a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) treatment card and others who seek healthcare in Australia. IHIs do not replace Medicare or DVA numbers and do not affect the way medical benefits are claimed. IHIs are not health records, the information held is limited to demographic information (such as name, date of birth and sex) which is needed to uniquely identify an individual.

2. Healthcare Provider Identifier - Individual (HPI-I)

The HPI-I is a number allocated to each healthcare provider involved in providing patient care. If you are registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), the agency will allocate you with a HPI-I and advise you of the number. You can check this number by looking at your AHPRA renewal notice.

3. Healthcare Provider Identifier - Organisation (HPI-O)

The HPI-O uniquely identifies each organisation where healthcare services are provided for example medical practices, pharmacies, hospitals. Practices will need to apply for their HPI-O via Medicare Australia.

- Information about the HPI-O registration process and forms are available via the Medicare website at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/health-identifier/index.jsp>
- Cradle Coast Electronic Health Information Exchange has also put together a useful guide and checklist to assist practices with the HPI-O application process it can be accessed via http://www.cradle-coast-ehealth.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/108932/Howto-HPI-O-Health-Provider-Identifier-for-Organisations-v1.4.pdf

Suggested actions:

- For a useful overview read the HI Service brochure tailored to healthcare providers available at <http://ehealthinfo.gov.au/assets/HI%20Brochure.pdf>
- Check your HPI-I (see your AHPRA letter)
- Find your PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) details and confirm that it is current
- Review the Cradle Coast checklist referred to above in preparation for applying for an HPI-O for your practice

If you would like copies of documents referred to above please contact Mandy or Claire at GPA South Gippsland on 5674 0900 or email info@gpasouthgippsland.com.au Or for more information from Medicare on Health Identifiers call 1300 361 457 or email healthcareidentifiers@medicareaustralia.gov.au