

7 November 2018

Chair, EPAS review Panel

Shane Solomon,

EPASreview@sa.gov.au

Dear Mr. Solomon

HCA is the peak body for health consumers in South Australia. We work with consumers and health services to position consumers at the centre of care. This work includes training and support to enable consumers and health professionals to collaborate in the design, delivery and evaluation of health policy, services and research.

HCA has collaborated with consumers to formulate our response to the EPAS Review.

Consumers are very clear that electronic medical records are essential in any contemporary health service. They understand that electronic medical records can improve safety, efficiency and care continuity. Consumers are pleased to have a system that provides an accurate record, regardless of which health service they attend. They place a high value on receiving timely discharge summaries and understand that these can be developed much more efficiently using electronic medical records.

It is imperative that there is one system that is adopted across all of SA. Consumers view the development and implementation of electronic medical records a significant capital investment – as important as any other building works.

Consumers are not concerned about whether the EMR and the PAS are one system or separate, only that they are secure, interface with each other and are upgradeable. That being said, as tax payers, consumers would prefer to see increased engagement and investment by the vendor to bring EPAS up to the required level of functionality. Adopting a new system would be expensive, and health services across the state would be working across either EPAS, the new system, or still using paper-based records for an extended time during testing and implementation of the new system. This would bring with it an increased level of risk, and possible confusion and resentment from staff who had finally gotten used to EPAS.

The vendor should be engaged to provide upgrades, provide training to EPAS champions across sites and teams, and support the roll out across each of the local health networks. We (South Australians) are purchasing a product that comes with a service component so there should be an ongoing relationship with the vendor. SA Health IT staff should be the system integrators, not the designers and builders adding to a partially developed system.

Consumers would value the additional functionality to enable them to view and contribute to their own medical record. When the bedside monitors were anticipated for use to input

into EPAS, there was an option for staff to turn the monitor so that patients could see what was being added to their record. The workstation on wheels (WOWs) is not as accessible for patient viewing. Patients would like to be able to contribute to their record to indicate if they believe that an entry to their record is inaccurate or could be wrongly interpreted. Consumers find that the use of WOWs provide significantly improved confidentiality compared to paper records at the end of the bed. People do at times experience frustration that staff are more connected to the computer than they are engaged with the patient, and hope that this improves as staff get comfortable with the technology.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Overton".

Julia Overton
Chief Executive