Paul Henderson
CHIEF MINISTER

June 30, 2009

Chief Minister Shows COAG How NT Innovation Saves Lives

The Northern Territory is leading the country in implementing a successful e-health program that will be the focus of the Chief Minister Paul Henderson’s presentation to the Council of Australian Government meeting in Darwin this week.

Mr Henderson said if the rest of Australia adopted our system many lives could be saved.

“e-health saves lives, saves time and saves money,” Mr Henderson said.

“We lead the country in e-health and we want the rest of Australia to benefit from our experience.”

“Over the past 4 years the Territory has used e-health to break down the tyranny of distance for Indigenous patients.

The result is the computer-based eHealthNT Shared Electronic Health Record service which has already signed up more than 35,000 Indigenous patients – that’s 66 per cent of Indigenous Territorians living in rural and remote communities.

“Prior to the introduction of e-health, doctors would have no medical history for an Indigenous patient from a remote community who presented for the first time at Royal Darwin Hospital,” Mr Henderson said.

“Phone calls and time would be spent on contacting the community clinic for a health history. That obviously became complicated if the patient had also had treatment in a number of other communities.

“The e-health service allows clinics to create, add and update a patient’s information so a doctor at any participating health clinic or public hospital in the Territory can get immediate access to a registered patient’s medical record.”

Mr Henderson said the eHealthNT Shared Electronic Health Record service offers many advantages, in particular:

- Improved quality and availability of health information
- Improved clinical decision making
- Reduced duplication of services (eg. repeat diagnostic tests)

“The benefits aren’t restricted to remote Indigenous patients – e-health could help all Australians,” Mr Henderson said.

“If the rest of the country followed the Territory, any Australian could walk into any clinic or hospital and doctors would have immediate access to their records.

“This is the sort of co-operation the Council of Australian Governments is all about – the sharing of success stories to benefit all Australians.”

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