

## ENHANCING WINTER PREPAREDNESS AND CARE DELIVERY WITH DIGITAL HEALTH

To prepare for the upcoming winter season and address the anticipated challenges from increased influenza, COVID-19 cases and risks to patients with chronic or complex health conditions, Murray PHN is collaborating with practices with a focus on digital health solutions. These solutions aim to enhance winter care delivery and manage patient flow more effectively.

	<b>TELEHEALTH</b> Technology that reduces the need for patients to travel during inclement weather, minimising accident risks and exposure to cold-related illnesses. Additionally, telemedicine eases pressure on healthcare facilities by keeping non-emergency cases out of waiting rooms and prioritising in-person consultations for critical cases.
	<b>MY HEALTH RECORD (MHR)</b> Enables healthcare providers to quickly access patient histories, allowing for rapid decision-making and coordination of care. This is crucial when dealing with high patient turnover and ensures continuity of care across different services.
	<b>PRESCRIPTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - eSCRIPTS AND ACTIVE SCRIPT LIST (ASL):</b> Electronic prescription services have evolved, now enabling patients to have medications automatically refilled and delivered. This development reduces strain on pharmacies and improves medication adherence, ensuring that patients receive necessary medications promptly during high-demand periods.
	<b>SECURE MESSAGING</b> Enhances communication between healthcare providers and patients, ensuring timely updates and coordinated care.
	<b>REMOTE MONITORING</b> Wearable health technology, including smart watches and health trackers, has gained traction in monitoring patients' vital signs remotely. For patients with chronic conditions, these devices provide real-time health data, allowing clinicians to monitor conditions closely and intervene before they worsen, effectively preventing unnecessary hospital admissions.
	<b>HEALTHPATHWAYS</b> An online clinical management and referral resource designed for health professionals to use during consultations with patients. It aims to guide best-practice assessment and management of common medical conditions, including when and where to refer patients, with guidance on what information is needed to maximise the quality of referrals and reduce waiting time for patients.
	<b>ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEMS</b> Systems that allow patients to book, reschedule or cancel appointments efficiently, enabling better patient flow management. By aligning patient needs with healthcare provider availability, these systems help to prevent overbooking and reduce wait times.

The integration of these technologies provides a robust framework for managing winter-related pressures.

# CASE STUDY - A PATIENT DIGITAL HEALTH JOURNEY

Harry has symptoms he is concerned about and looks them up on the healthdirect Symptom Checker, which can be accessed through the my health app (MyHA). Harry uses MyHA to make an appointment with his GP and receives an appointment reminder by SMS beforehand.

Harry attends his appointment. Following a discussion and assessment, the GP provides an eScript and eRequests (pathology and imaging) and uploads a shared health summary to Harry's My Health Record (MHR) to reflect his medication changes and requests which Harry can review through his MyHA. The GP also provides an eReferral to the community health centre for a physiotherapy appointment.

Harry attends a local pharmacy and provides an e-token to the pharmacist, who dispenses the required medicine. Harry also attends his pathology lab and imaging labs to complete the GP-requested tests, providing them with the token he received via his phone. The labs upload Harry's results to his MHR, which are available for both Harry and his GP to review via MHR and the MyHA.

At Harry's follow-up appointment (held via videoconference due to inclement weather and to avoid Harry having to sit in the waiting room with other potentially unwell patients), Harry's overall health has improved. Harry's GP checks his vaccination status via Harry's MHR to ensure his immunisations are up to date. After this review, Harry's GP sends him an eScript for his ongoing medication needs and acknowledges receipt of a progress update from his physiotherapist received via eMessaging.

For further information and support, visit the [Murray PHN Digital Health webpage](#) or contact the [Digital Health team](#).