

Meeting Report NNO ehealth subcommittee 22 May 2007

Present:

Desley Hegney (ARNM)
 Denise Dignam (CDNM)
 Moya Conrick (NIA)
 Evelyn Hovenga (NIA)
 Elizabeth Foley (RCNA)
 Fiona Armstrong (ANF)
 Julianne Bryce (ANF)

Apologies:

Rosemary Bryant (RCNA)
 Roslyn Lockhart (CATSIN)

The purpose of the subcommittee meeting was to identify issues of concern for nurses with regard to ehealth and develop a strategy for next steps in relation to the activity of this subcommittee.

A range of issues were identified. These include:

1. That of the lack of engagement of the nursing profession in influencing the ehealth agenda and the sense that nurses will be left behind if they don't engage with the rollout of IT systems;
2. Many clinical systems are being implemented that do not reflect the needs of clinicians in terms of capturing data that reflects their contribution and/or subsequent patient outcomes;
3. There is a significant lack of expertise in the existing nursing workforce in relation to IT, and one of the challenges for the nursing profession is to ensure that nurses are upskilled in order to be competent to use electronic clinical communication systems;
4. A lot of work is going at the jurisdictional levels that means that a range of systems are being developed for clinical communication that do not necessarily articulate well with each other, or at all.
5. There is a low level of semantic interoperability between developing clinical information systems - there is a need to ensure this is made a priority in the development and adoption of clinical information systems or there is a risk that the clinical information will not be able to be shared between different health professions;
6. There is a diminishing number of nursing schools offering courses in nursing informatics at either the undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and unless education providers are given support to continue to provide education in the specialty of nursing informatics and its unique expertise is at risk in Australia;
7. There is a need to ensure skills in nursing informatics are embedded within undergraduate curricula;
8. Nurses are poorly represented on many institutional and jurisdictional committees developing ehealth standards and practice guidelines;
9. There is no coherent national strategy for capacity building and education of health professionals concurrent with the roll-out of clinical information systems;

10. The shift to electronic health records is likely to have a significant impact on the immediate future working environment for nurses, and it is likely to have significant effects on the way care is delivered, and affect the future skill mix of the nursing workforce. It is vital that nurses remain engaged with the issues associated with the development and roll out of clinical communications systems to ensure the unique discipline of nursing, and its interventions and associated outcomes are going to be accurately captured by the clinical information systems being implemented or there is a risk that the value of nursing work will be unable to be demonstrated.
11. There is a need to engage expert nurse clinicians in the ehealth agenda.
12. There is a timely opportunity with the move to national registration and accreditation to inform the national agenda in relation to inclusion of health informatics in nursing curricula content.

Next steps:

The committee identified an urgent need for the nursing profession to have access to the Nursing and IT study to promote the issues identified in that report.

Fiona will find out if the report is now available for public release and circulate it to this subcommittee as soon as possible.

The subcommittee will then consider whether to develop a position paper with a series of recommendations in response to this report.

The subcommittee will act a reference group for Moya Conrick who is a member of the Australian Health Information Council and will provide a summary of issues in the form of a briefing paper for the next AHIC meeting.

A summary of the key issues as seen by each of the members of the subcommittee should be forwarded to Moya by **8 June 2007**.