

Ministry makes NEHR mandatory in Singapore

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The proposed changes will likely be tabled in Parliament next year.



The Ministry of Health (MOH) intends to make it compulsory for all healthcare providers to upload data to the National Electronic Health Record (NEHR), from large hospitals all the way down to the neighbourhood GP clinic.

The main objective is to make sure that every aspect of a person's medical history, including visits to doctors in the private sector, chronic medication, allergies and vaccination records, will be reflected in these records.

These plans come on the back of a slow take-up rate from private healthcare providers in the six years since the NEHR was launched in 2011.

Singapore is one of the first countries to have established such a comprehensive system. The government feels that the sharing of medical information in a national electronic repository will make for more seamless treatment and save money for patients.

The proposed changes will likely be tabled in Parliament next year. If approved, healthcare groups will be given a grace period of around three years to make the necessary preparations.

Currently, most NEHR data comes from public sector institutions, such as public hospitals and polyclinics. A recent study of 1,500 private healthcare institutions done by the Integrated Health Information Systems found that two in 10 private GPs and specialist clinics still use written medical records, rather than an electronic system.

MOH will be organising workshops for doctors to help them understand the new requirements. Workshops will also be conducted for IT vendors who help doctors provide such electronic clinical management services.