

## Unique Healthcare Identifiers

**2008**

This document outlines the AMA position on Unique Healthcare Identifiers. It supersedes the previous AMA Position Statement on Unique Patient Identifiers (2000).

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The AMA is committed to achieving better health outcomes for all Australians by working with stakeholders to realise the objectives of a unique healthcare identifier.
- 1.2. The Council of Australian Governments has committed Australia to a single, national approach to identifying individuals and healthcare providers for the purposes of health communications.
- 1.3. In January 2008 Medicare Australia was contracted by the National E-Health Transition Authority to design and build the unique healthcare identifier system to support a future national approach to individual electronic health records.

### 2. Purpose of a Unique Healthcare Identifier

- 2.1. A unique healthcare identifier is an enabling technology which will facilitate the secure access and sharing of a patient's electronic health record by healthcare providers.
- 2.2. A UHI will uniquely identify:
  - (a) Individuals (patients);
  - (b) Individual healthcare providers (eg. General practitioners, pharmacists, pathologists);
  - and
  - (c) Healthcare organisations (eg. Hospitals, pharmacies, pathology laboratories).
- 2.3. A unique number will offer greater protection of who can access and share individual electronic health records.

### 3. AMA Position

- 3.1. The AMA supports the development of a unique healthcare identifier and recognises it as an essential building block towards the implementation of a national individual electronic health record;
- 3.2. The AMA believes medical practitioners and consumers must be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of a unique healthcare identifier;
- 3.3. The AMA believes the unique healthcare identifier should be used solely to identify individuals for the purposes of accessing and sharing individual electronic health records;
- 3.4. The AMA encourages individuals and healthcare providers to obtain a unique healthcare identifier so they can share individual electronic health records securely;
- 3.5. The AMA supports legislation that protects the personal information attached to the unique healthcare identifier and
  - (a) Sets out the precise use and nature of the information and the unique healthcare identifier;
  - (b) Protects the collection of and access to the unique healthcare identifier information;
  - (c) Protects the privacy, security and confidentiality of the unique healthcare identifier information;
  - (d) Prohibits unauthorised use of the unique healthcare identifier information;
  - (e) Provides penalties for misuse of the unique healthcare identifier.

The AMA Expert Advisory Committee on Information Technology has principal carriage of the Position Statement of Unique Healthcare Identifiers.

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