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**AMENDMENTS STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY AND PRIVACY OF THE MY HEALTH RECORD**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the AMA supports the Government’s proposed amendments to the My Health Record Act, which address concerns raised by the AMA, especially around privacy, confidentiality, and access by insurers.

Dr Bartone said the AMA had worked closely with Minister Hunt and the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) to make changes that will provide greater confidence in the security of the Record for doctors and patients.

“We initially worked with the Government on a first draft of the Bill to fix the concerns about warrant access, and to allow people to delete their record, which gives them the practical ability to opt-out at any time should they choose,” Dr Bartone said.

“These amendments are now in the Bill.

“We also called for a significant national communications effort to ensure that people know more about the My Health Record.

“In a positive move, the Senate Committee agrees that the legislation should now be passed.

“The AMA also supports the Labor amendments to the Bill. We consulted Labor about their suggestions and agree that they further improve the Bill, and provide stronger protections for our patients.

“We welcome this morning’s announcement that the Government will adopt the Labor suggestions.”

Dr Bartone said that the AMA had lobbied strongly to deny insurer access to the Record, and for the lifting of the Secondary Use Framework into the legislation. These elements are now covered in the new amendments as a direct result of AMA advocacy.

“We have had successful Committee review of the legislation, improvements made with the input of the Opposition, and consultation to hear and respond to major stakeholder concerns,” Dr Bartone said.

“We also welcome the commitment to review the issue of parental access to the Records of 14-17 year olds.

“This and other concerns that arise can be addressed through policy change once the My Health Record Act is passed.

“The My Health Record may not yet be perfect, but it will get there with the support of the public and the health professions. It is better than anything else out there now. Some doctors are still using their fax machines. We need to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“What is at stake is an important tool to boost the access to vital health information on the patient journey through the health system.

“We are now at the point where we can realise the potential and the dividend of a decade’s work and billions of dollars of investment.

“We cannot allow our excellent health system and the quality of care we provide our patients to fall behind the rest of the world that has fully embraced the benefits of electronic health.

“The AMA has supported and promoted the concept of an electronic health record for decades. Its time has come. The My Health Record will save lives and improve the quality of life for many Australians,” Dr Bartone said.

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