

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**Transcript:** AMA President Dr Tony Bartone, Channel 9, *Today*, with Karl Stefanovic, Thursday, 26 July 2018

**Subject:** My Health Record

---

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** The Australian Medical Association has vowed to do whatever it takes to protect patient privacy, amid growing concerns over the security of the Federal Government's My Health Record site. AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, joins me now from Canberra.

Tony, good morning to you. Just how concerned are you about this?

**TONY BARTONE:** Good morning, Karl. Yes. Look, anything that interferes or gets in the way of the privacy and security of our patients' records is of course a concern for us. We hold that privacy, we hold that security at the utmost paramount importance. We sought assurances earlier in the week about the concerns around that. We've had some written assurances. But it's become clear from a groundswell of both feedback from our members and from the public in general that there's still a perceived ambiguity between the legislation and that potential access.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** Is it perceived ambiguity? Is it a perceived problem or is it real?

**TONY BARTONE:** Well, Karl, the legislation doesn't really typically completely rule that out, but we've had that written assurance... I made a call to the Minister yesterday and I said that we need to clear up any perceived ambiguity. We need to put that to bed once and for all and I've sought a meeting with the Minister early next week.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** Okay. So, what physically needs to happen here to protect our privacy and the privacy of health records around Australia? What actually needs to happen now?

**TONY BARTONE:** Well, at the moment, access to those records is really only through a judge's request, through the judicial oversight, through the court system. We need to see that that is enshrined as the default system for this current situation we're going through to the My Health Record. We'll examine the whole legislation, the whole implementation of the My Health Record, and whatever needs to happen so that that faith, that trust, that absolute respect that the patients have for their privacy and their security remains.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** What we need to know and what we want to know, I guess, everyone around the country will want to know is, can anyone just access our private health records as it stands this morning?

**TONY BARTONE:** Absolutely not, Karl. There is a whole heap of privacy provisions and legislation around what can and can't happen. At the moment, without a court order, or without any other legislative regulatory access, there is no way anyone can access your file unless you...

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** [Interrupts] Police can though, can't they?

**TONY BARTONE:** No, they still need a warrant.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** Okay. And what about if customers want to opt out of this, can they?

**TONY BARTONE:** Look, of course they can. We're in the beginning of a three-month opt out period. But it's important to understand that there is a clinical utility to it. They should have a conversation with their doctor if they're at all concerned. There is information on the website that they can get. But, of course, at the end of the day, it's My Health Record. They can opt out. They can control it. They can determine who gets access to it.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** So, given the security concerns that you have, have you decided to opt out?

**TONY BARTONE:** No, I have not, Karl. I'll be remaining in there and on 15 October I'll be one of the many millions of Australians who'll remain with a record on the system.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:** Okay, that says a lot. Thank you so much. Appreciate your time.

**TONY BARTONE:** Thank you.

---

26 July 2018

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761  
Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/ama\\_media](http://twitter.com/ama_media)

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>