

Digitising public hospitals

(Report 10: 2018–19).
Tabled 4 December 2018.

Slide 1: Welcome

This presentation summarises our performance audit report on digitising public hospitals.

Please note that this is a summary. The full report can be read on our website.

Slide 2: Audit objective

In this audit, we assessed how well Queensland Health has planned and is delivering its digital hospitals program and whether it is realising the intended information-sharing and patient benefits.

Slide 3: Context—integrated electronic medical records

The Queensland healthcare system is transforming to meet the pressures of an ageing population, the growing burden of chronic conditions, and changing consumer expectations.

In a digital hospital, processes are streamlined to create a ‘paper light’ approach, integrating electronic medical records (ieMR) with clinic devices, workflows, and processes. An electronic medical record is one of many applications that contribute to a digital hospital. The government has set a target for twenty-seven hospitals to fully implement the ieMR solution by June 2020.

Electronic medical records provide timely, accessible and legible information about patients at the point of care. It also provides the foundation for future transformations in health care delivery, like the ability to gain greater insights and decision support from the system’s data to improve the quality of patient care and operational efficiencies.

Slide 4: Our conclusions—benefits realisation

The hospitals we audited had realised some benefits, but at a slower rate than predicted in the business case. In particular, they are realising benefits in reducing unplanned readmission rates and reducing the time it takes for staff to access clinical information.

Health and Hospital Services (HHSs) have also realised additional benefits that were not in the program’s business case, for example, reduction in inpatient falls with serious injury and hospital-acquired pressure injuries.

Slide 5: Our conclusions—program costs

To better inform government’s decisions about future phases, the department needs to obtain a clearer understanding of the complete cost of implementing the program. It also needs to do further analysis and consultation with HHSs to determine how they will pay for the operating costs of supporting the solution when the program closes in 2025.

Slide 6: Our conclusions—value for money

Some stakeholders have questioned whether there has been a strong enough focus on value for money. The program didn't conduct robust analysis of alternative vendors in recent business cases. Nor has the program focused on ensuring the program is continuing to receive the best price with the current vendor.

We acknowledge that there are advantages in having a single vendor for all sites. But we also note that it is possible for hospitals with different digital systems to share data.

Slide 7: Our conclusions – Data access and security

The department and HHSs need to strengthen information security. The department needs to be more proactive in restricting how users can access the ieMR system and HHSs need to better manage how they monitor and terminate user access.

Slide 8: Our conclusions – Engagement with hospital staff and clinicians

An external survey conducted at the request of the department found, on average, the impact of the ieMR implementation was mostly positive. However, some audit interviewees outside of the hospitals that were surveyed raised concerns about the lack of engagement. The department needs to assess the effectiveness of the current engagement strategy with hospital staff and clinicians.

Slide 9: What we recommend

We made 12 recommendations to the department and the hospital and health services (HHSs) that have implemented the ieMR solution to improve:

- program governance
- project cost estimation
- reporting and realisation of benefits
- vendor and contract management
- the program's engagement with hospital staff and clinicians
- password security, and
- processes for managing user access.

Slide 10: For more information

For more information on the issues, opportunities and recommendations highlighted in this summary presentation, please see the full report on our website.

Thank you.