



# What is an Electronic Health Record (eHR)?

An electronic health record (eHR) refers to a record in electronic format containing health-related data of an individual, stored and retrievable by healthcare professionals (HCProf) for healthcare purposes.

Countries around the world are implementing different systems of eHR. Following the commencement of the eHRSS Bill on 2 December 2015, Hong Kong's **Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS)** will be launched in 1Q 2016.

By maintaining a comprehensive online clinical record of patients



eHRSS will provide timely access to patients' health information



To facilitate improved patient care

## Why should I participate in eHRSS?

The patient journey often involves both public and private healthcare services. This is reflected by the popularity and utilisation of the Public-Private Interface - Electronic Patient Record Sharing Pilot Project (PPI-ePR), which allowed private doctors to securely access the Hospital Authority (HA) Electronic Patient Record (ePR) records via a web-based portal.

As of October 2015, there are more than 2,600 private HCProfs and 460,000 patients enrolled into the PPI-ePR, with an average of over 200,000 accesses made each year by private healthcare providers (HCP) to view the clinical records of HA.

eHRSS is an advancement from PPI-ePR by enabling two-way sharing of health records contributed by both public and private sectors. Collaborative patient-centred care can be provided in a more efficient and seamless manner.

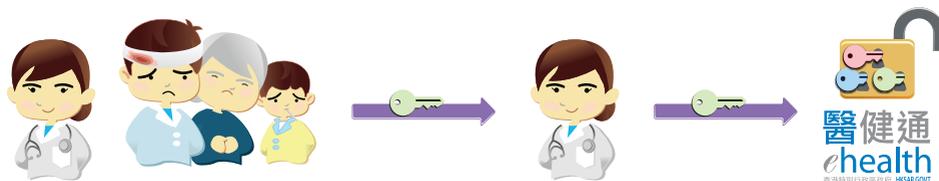
## What are the benefits of eHRSS?

eHRSS provides a sharing platform for patients' health records to be shared among HCPs to improve safety and efficiency of clinical care. It also enhances quality and continuity of care by improving communication and sharing of health information.

## How does it work?

The participation of eHRSS is voluntary for both HCP and patient. eHR sharing is based on the patient's expressed and informed consent and participation in eHRSS is on a voluntary basis.

Only if the HCP has joined eHRSS, with all required consents given by the patient, the HCProfs of the HCPs may access patient's eHR.



**1** HCP & patient join eHRSS

**2** Patient gives consent to HCP to access his / her record

**3** HCP can access and contribute to patient's eHR

# What will happen to PPI-ePR when eHRSS commences operation?

There will be a transitional period for parallel run of PPI-ePR and eHRSS after eHRSS operation. The eHR Office will provide support to PPI-ePR participants to register in eHRSS. The PPI-ePR will eventually step down upon appropriate notice to the HCPs.

## eHR Checklist – Are you ready for eHRSS?

View eHR Only	
Computer*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Internet connection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Authentication software installation (available for free)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hong Kong Identity Card (HKIC) card reader (available for free)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sharing eHR	
eHR enabled electronic medical record (eMR)* system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* For detailed computer specifications, please go to [www.ehealth.gov.hk](http://www.ehealth.gov.hk) for more information.

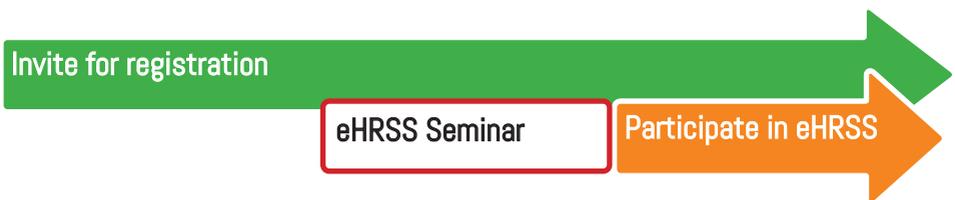
# Do I need to invest a lot on computer hardware and software to access eHRSS?

As a basic requirement for viewing only, you will need a computer with internet access.

The eHR Office will provide free HKIC card reader and authentication software for capturing sharing consent and secure log in to eHRSS.

The eHR Office provides a free clinical software package that enables eHRSS connection if the HCP requires. There are also clinical management systems in the market which are connectable to eHRSS after technical adjustments.

## Way Forward



### **Dec 2015**

If you are a PPI-ePR user, we will send an invitation to you in December 2015 and advise you on how to participate in eHRSS

### **Jan 2016 onwards**

Come along to the eHRSS Overview Seminar for the most up-to-date information on eHRSS

### **1Q 2016 - beyond**

eHRSS go-live! You may register to participate in and start accessing eHR!

# FAQ

Here we provide some answers to questions and concerns you may have before you decide to participate eHRSS.

## eHRSS Registration

### **1. I have my own clinic and I am also a visiting Medical Officer (VMO) of some private hospitals, what should I do to view patients' eHR in both places?**

eHRSS registration is HCP-based. Only HCPs working in the HCP could view the eHR on a need to know basis. If you are the owner of a clinic, it is advisable that the clinic (e.g. Dr Chan Tai Man Clinic) should be registered as a HCP. If you wish to access eHR in another HCP (e.g. a private hospital), you will need respective HCP to allow you to use its computer systems (e.g. open a user account for you).

### **2. What should I do if I wish to register my clinic (as HCP) with eHRSS?**

You can contact eHR Registration Office or visit [www.ehealth.gov.hk](http://www.ehealth.gov.hk) for more information.

### **3. What should I do as a healthcare professional if I want to join eHRSS?**

eHRSS registration is HCP-based. If the HCP you work for has joined eHRSS, you may need to obtain authorisation to access eHRSS from your HCP. In addition, you will need to maintain an active professional registration status with respective Professional Boards and Councils.

### **4. We are a group practice with clinics all over Hong Kong, is it possible that only some of the clinics join the eHRSS?**

HCP can apply to the eHR Commissioner to register all or some of the healthcare institutions / clinics providing care under its supervision to participate in eHR sharing.

## **5. Is it essential for HCPs to provide eHR patient registration service?**

The eHR Office anticipates that some HCPs, especially those in solo practice or small group practice would not be able to provide eHRSS patient registration service. HCPs can inform patients to register for eHRSS via online, postal mail, fax, drop-in box at eHR Registration Office or in person at their nearby eHR Registration Centres. The list of eligible HCPs and eHR Registration Centres will be made publicly available soon.

## **6. My clinic has participated in the PPI-ePR & Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Programmes, but we do not want to join eHRSS at the moment, can we still access PPI-ePR and look after my existing PPI and PPP patients when eHRSS is launched?**

PPI-ePR will continue to run for a period of time after eHRSS is launched. During the transitional period and if you have not joined eHRSS:

- a) You can still access the health record of existing PPI-ePR and PPP patients.
- b) You will not be able to access health record of new patients who have joined eHRSS after eHRSS launch.

## **7. What if I have joined eHRSS but my existing PPI-ePR / PPP patients have not joined eHRSS after eHRSS launch?**

- a) PPI-ePR will continue to run for a period of time after eHRSS is launched.
- b) During the transitional period, you can still access the health record of existing PPI-ePR and PPP patients who have not joined eHRSS. Only data from the HA will be shared.
- c) Once your existing PPI-ePR / PPP patients have joined eHRSS and provided sharing consent to your HCP, you will be able to access their health records shared from other HCPs for whom they have given sharing consent.

# Using the eHRSS

## **8. Will eHR Office often come to my clinic to perform *ad hoc* or regular security audit checking on my computer system?**

Security audit is an explicit requirement for any computer systems connecting with eHRSS for information sharing as stipulated in the eHRSS Ordinance and the Code of Practice (COP). The eHR Office shall carry out such audit only on required basis such as under certain compliant scenarios. However, we will try to minimise disturbance to clinical operation of HCPs as far as possible.

## **9. Can I access eHRSS when I am providing home care to patients?**

It is technically possible. You can access eHRSS through your notebook computer installed with software package for safe access to eHRSS. Due to security concerns, mobile devices, e.g. mobile phones or tablets, cannot access eHRSS.

## **10. Can I refuse to access my patients' eHR?**

eHR is for reference purpose. It is the duty of the healthcare professional to assess the necessity to view and the information required to be read from eHRSS for their patients. Healthcare professionals shall judge on a case-by-case base.

## **11. Can I refuse my patients' request to share their records on eHRSS?**

eHRSS participation is voluntary for both patients and HCPs. Patients themselves should decide whether to participate. If you have joined eHRSS, it is reasonable to inform your patients of your readiness for eHR sharing upon patients' enquiry. Some HCPs are not technically ready to upload and share patients' certain information on eHRSS. They may then choose to view records of their patients contributed by other HCPs for patient care.

**12. Can I print or download information from the eHRSS to my own clinical record?**

You can print patients' information from the eHRSS for clinical record filing purpose. However, you are not allowed to download information from eHRSS except for personal identification and allergy information.

**13. What if my patient requests printing out his / her eHR information?**

The eHR Office does not advise HCP to print eHRSS information for patients. If patients wish to obtain a copy of their eHR, they should raise a data access request with eHR Registration Office.

**14. What should I do if my patients' relatives / friends / employer request to access the patients' eHR?**

Healthcare professionals shall ensure each access to a patient's eHR complies with the "need-to-know" and "patient-under-care" principles. Healthcare professional can explain to the requester that it is an offence to access the patient's eHR or disclose it to a third party without complying with the eHRSS Ordinance and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

**15. There is some "confidential" information in my patient records that my patients may not want to share on eHRSS. Can I censor them out of the sharable data scope?**

There is no "safety box" or "confidential drawer" in current stage of eHRSS. Only if a piece of data within the sharable scope is not electronically ready, it will then not be disclosed. Otherwise, it could not be hid / withheld.

**16. Do I need to press a button to upload data? Do I need to input patient's health information on eHRSS directly?**

No. If you are using an eHR enabled eMR system, relevant information within sharable scope from your eMR system will automatically be extracted and uploaded to eHRSS.

**17. Will the Government be able to view all clinical records stored in my local systems once I joined eHRSS?**

No. Connection to eHRSS does not mean opening up the access rights of the local eMR to the Government. eHRSS does not have access to local eMR and will only be able to share data uploaded by local eMR that falls within the sharable scope and meets the interface standard to the central platform. Data kept in local systems are not accessible by eHRSS.

**18. Will the Government be able to view my clinical record once I joined eHRSS?**

No. Viewing of eHR is only allowed for healthcare professionals who have obtained patient's consent for healthcare purpose. The Government and the eHR Office only act as the platform owner and administrator and will not access patient's records except during investigations, legal proceedings or related matters.

**19. Should I challenge other healthcare professional's treatment merely by making reference to the information in the patients' eHR?**

No. According to the COP for eHR, healthcare professionals shall not use information on eHRSS for alleging challenges or criticism to depreciate the professional skills, knowledge services or qualification of other healthcare professionals and / or HCPs.

# Legal Concerns

## **20. What is my legal liability if I miss some relevant information on eHRSS for caring of my patient?**

Participation at eHR is voluntary for HCP and healthcare professionals. There is no mandatory requirement for a healthcare professional to join eHRSS or read all information in a patient's record in eHRSS. Healthcare professionals shall exercise professional judgement to interpret the information in eHRSS and consider what information shall be accessed for reference purpose.

## **21. Is it essential to share data and is there any legal liability for not sharing data if I have joined eHR?**

There is no obligation for HCPs to share their patients' record which are not electronically readily available for sharing. It is not an offence under eHRSS Ordinance for not sharing data. However it is a deviation from the conditions of participation. It is advisable for HCPs to consider implementing or upgrading their eMR systems for sharing more data within sharable scope. There are free eMR packages available for private sectors to enable sharing of information with eHRSS. The eHR Office also works with major vendors of clinic software to support data uploading.

## **22. Is there high risk of legal liability after joining eHRSS as the Ordinance introduced offences for misusing eHR?**

No. The offences mostly deal with unauthorised access to eHR, causing damage or impairing the System with malicious intent, or using eHR for direct marketing purpose.



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