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## Beyond the PCEHR: Best Practices to Derive Value in the Era of Connected Care

### Introduction

Australia's recent launch of the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) - a significant step towards establishing a national e-Health infrastructure - has simultaneously provided a boost to shared Electronic Patient Record (EPR) projects and delivered a wake-up call to healthcare providers about their readiness for connected care initiatives. In countries around the world, the era of connected care is here.

The PCEHR has increased both the push and pull factors that will lead to widespread shared EPR adoption. Some organisations - such as state health departments - will be required to connect to the PCEHR to share patient information such as discharge summaries. Others will see the PCEHR as a resource that can add value to their own health information system investments.

The PCEHR is the largest of a number of health information exchange networks in Australia, some of which - such as the South West Alliance of Rural Health (SWARH) in Victoria - are more functionally advanced, although more limited in scope. And there are other emerging national healthcare information services such as the National Health Services Directory.

Regardless of whether healthcare organisations are pushing for or being pulled towards exchanging health information, connected care initiatives are an increasingly important driver for IT investments. While funds for new healthcare information infrastructure remain tight, a number of connected care successes are coming into focus, with proven value that provides strong justification for new investments.

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