



WHAT IS A NATIONAL ELECTRONIC PATIENT SUMMARY?





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Background



Treating patients without access to their medical records – such as in an out-of-hours or emergency situation – is challenging.

Many countries have developed an electronic patient summary, which makes an electronic snapshot of the patient's essential clinical information available to healthcare professionals treating the patient in such situations.

HIQA develops standards for health information to make healthcare safer. HIQA has looked at what other countries around the world do, and found that electronic patient summaries can help healthcare professionals to provide safer, better care to patients. Summary care records are also listed as a priority in Ireland's Sláintecare Implementation Strategy.



When is it used

Electronic patient summaries help healthcare staff to treat patients with specific needs, such as people with intellectual difficulties, cognitive impairments, or complex conditions, as well as people who take numerous medications.

Electronic patient summaries are particularly helpful when the patient:



- **cannot remember details**
of their medication or medical history – or remembers it incorrectly



- **has complex conditions or medications**



- **is unconscious or unresponsive**



- **is not able to answer questions**
because of intellectual challenges, language difficulties or other factors

Patient stories

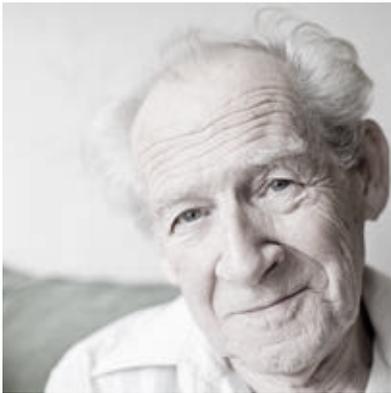


Allie's story

Allie, aged 42, collapsed while shopping and was brought to the local emergency department. Allie's blood pressure was very low...



Heart conditions



Jack's story

Jack, aged 83, has emphysema which is treated with an inhaler. On Thursday, Jack felt unwell and short of breath...

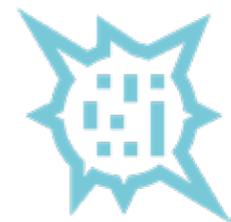


Antibiotics



Luca's story

Luca, aged 3, was brought to the out-of-hours GP by his grandmother, after he developed a rash and a temperature...



Allergies



The following stories show how an electronic patient summary can help healthcare professionals to provide safe and effective healthcare to patients in a variety of settings.



Allie's story



Allie's story



Allie, aged 42, collapsed while shopping and was brought to the local emergency department. Allie's blood pressure was very low.

Allie's electronic patient summary showed the emergency department doctor that Allie was recently diagnosed with high blood pressure and had been prescribed medication.



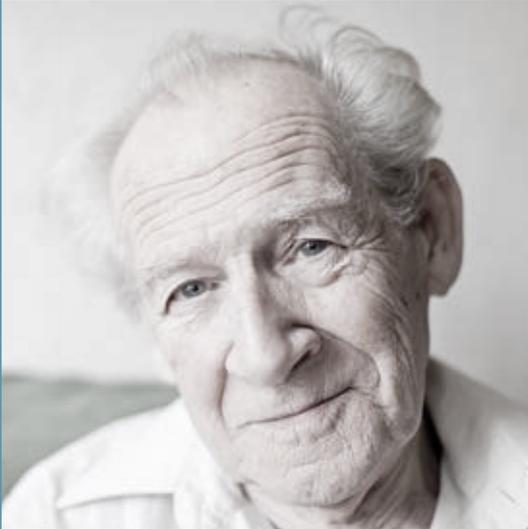
While speaking with Allie, the emergency department doctor realised that Allie had accidentally taken a very high dosage and advised her on the correct dosage, before discharging her.



Jack's story



Jack's story



Jack, aged 83, has emphysema which is treated with an inhaler. On Thursday, Jack felt unwell and short of breath. He visited his doctor (GP), who prescribed antibiotics.

Still feeling poorly on Saturday, Jack went to the local out-of-hours clinic. The clinic doctor reviewed the electronic patient summary and advised Jack to increase the dosage of his inhaler.



On Sunday, Jack woke up struggling for breath and was taken to the local emergency department. Having checked Jack's electronic patient summary, the doctor prescribed steroids and a different antibiotic for him.



Luca's story



Luca's story



Luca, aged 3, was brought to the out-of-hours GP by his grandmother, after he developed a rash and a temperature. Luca's parents couldn't be contacted and his grandmother did not speak English.

The clinic doctor viewed Luca's electronic patient summary, confirmed that Luca's had no known allergy to penicillin having been previously prescribed it.



Suspecting meningitis, the clinic doctor treated Luca immediately with intravenous penicillin and arranged for his transfer to the emergency department.



National Standard

HIQA consulted with healthcare professionals, including out-of-hours and emergency staff, and the public, to define the kinds of clinical information that should be included in an Irish electronic patient summary:



Subject of care

Patient's name, address, date of birth, and next of kin details.



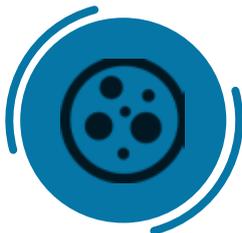
Health conditions

All health problems or diagnoses which the patient has.



Procedures

Any procedures the patient has had.



Allergies

Any diagnosed allergies that the patient has.



Vaccinations

All vaccinations that the patient has received.



Medications

All the medications the patient is currently prescribed.

Find out more

For more information about any aspect of this national standard for an electronic patient summary, contact HIQA's Technical Standards team.

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All our publications are available from our website.



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