

Media release Monday 16 March 2020

COVID-19: AIDH announces revised conference and event program

The Australasian Institute of Digital Health is deferring its conference programme until later in the year as a response to COVID-19.

Australia's largest digital health and health informatics scientific conference HIC 2020 will be the pinnacle of a combined digital health series in Brisbane from 17 to 21 October 2020.

The Nursing Informatics international congress (NI2020), which was to be held in conjunction with HIC in July, will be postponed and held alongside the international medical informatics congress MedInfo 2021, to be held in Sydney 21-25 August 2021.

The Australian Telehealth Conference (ATC2020), due to be held in Melbourne from 29-30 April, will also move to the combined digital health event series in Brisbane in October. Speakers, delegates and sponsors are being contacted today to advise them of the new arrangements.

The series will also feature Health Data Analytics 2020, 17-18 October, rounding out the events with a technical health data program.

Institute CEO Dr Louise Schaper said: "Digital health has never been more needed, and digital health workforce skills more in demand, than right now during the COVID-19 health crisis. Everyone in the health sector is intensively focused on managing in this challenging environment and getting on with the job.

"Our members, with their extensive digital health knowledge, are among those at the forefront of telehealth policy, governance and delivery and they are needed in the community right now," Dr Schaper said.

She said the recently launched Institute, formed from a merger between the Health Informatics Society of Australia and the Australasian College of Health Informatics, had experienced a spike in membership enquiries.

"We are receiving many enquiries about Fellowship of the Institute, and we are seeing strong growth in the national certification program CHIA which is one of our key programs for building digital health workforce capacity," she said. "We are ramping up our efforts to release other workforce-based programs that can be delivered virtually in order to assist the health sector build digital health capability".

"We will continue to monitor and follow government advice, including the need for social distancing. Given the pressures on the health sector at present, we have made the decision not to hold in-person events for the time being. Our smaller professional development events hosted by our state committees will be delivered virtually where possible."

Institute Chair Michael Walsh said: "I'd like to thank Australia's digital health community for their ongoing support as we examine how we can continue to support our members who are under such increased pressure at this time."

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