

Media statement

29 September 2021

INSTITUTE BACKS STANDARDS BASED APPROACH TO DIGITAL VACCINE PASSPORT

The Australasian Institute of Digital Health says a standards-based approach is required to give Australians the confidence they are seeking in a smart health card that proves their COVID vaccination status.

AIDH CEO Dr Louise Schaper said Australians expected to be able to prove they are double vaccinated with one digital passport wherever they travel across the country, not have to use a different app for each state.

“As Australian states and territories plot a roadmap out of lockdown and border restrictions, the issue of verifiable COVID immunisation and lab certificates is increasingly a hot topic in the community,” Dr Schaper said.

“Australians will expect to be able to use a single, secure app wherever they travel across the country, not have to use a different app for each state.”

“A standards-based solution and infrastructure based on SMART Health Cards and HL7 FHIR resources is already in place in the US and Canada,” Dr Schaper said.

She said the Institute was endorsing a [webinar on 5 October](#), hosted by HL7 Australia and supported by the VCI Consortium, as a way to explore how the SMART health cards could work in Australia, given our unique requirements.

AIDH Fellow and global health informatics leader Grahame Grieve said in Australia at present the state governments seem to be focused on building an app-based solution that looks likely to create difficulties between the states and could see those without smartphones out in the cold.

“Security around proof of COVID immunisation is going to be increasingly important to people and this can only be achieved with solid certification through a standards-based approach,” he said.

“SMART health cards have QR codes which can be carried on smartphones, and they can also be printed out on paper – even on T-shirts! – without loss of information,” he said.

“This approach has the US industry, healthcare system and government behind it, and while it’s not the “single standard” we hoped for, it is a working standard we could adopt now.”

Mr Grieve said an Australian profile would need to be developed around the SMART Card to bring it closer to Australia’s own requirements.

Anyone in the digital health community interested in hearing from key thinkers and implementers in the US health IT community on the SMART Health Card and FHIR are invited to register for the webinar.

END