

MEDIA RELEASE
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Priorities for an incoming Albanese Government: Addressing health workforce challenges and investing in the digital enablement of health and aged care

The Australasian Institute of Digital Health (AIDH) congratulates The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP and the Australian Labor Party on their success in the 2022 Federal Election and welcomes the announcement of The Hon. Mark Butler MP as the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing.

As a priority, the Institute is strongly urging the federal government to continue to invest in the digital enablement of healthcare, and in the capability required for our health system to be responsive in an increasingly interdependent health and aged care landscape.

The Institute says the impact of the pandemic is clearly evident from the system-wide pressures and workforce shortages across the Australian healthcare system.

AIDH CEO Dr Louise Schaper says as the health workforce faces challenges on all fronts, it will be important to hold on to hard-fought gains in digital health.

"We need to preserve the momentum gained from the rapid scaling of consumer centric, digitally enabled health solutions in response to the pandemic," Dr Schaper said.

"But now it's time to make serious inroads on the digital enablement of health. We have the technology to do so. We need to fast track Australia's uptake of these solutions to increase efficiencies and ease workforce pressures and health system demand – and that starts with a national, unified approach to delivering healthcare in a modern society.

"The health sector also lacks a critical mass of personnel with technical expertise in computing and data harvesting, storage, and analysis. Attracting these skills into the health sector is one part of the solution to the health workforce crisis."

"The Institute is strongly focused on building workforce capacity in digital health. There is a need for everyone working in healthcare to have an understanding and competence of delivering care in a digital world.

"Health consumers today want healthcare delivered virtually, anywhere, anytime and they want the health system to recognise them during all of their interactions."

AIDH is calling for a national virtual care strategy that will:

- I. guarantee permanency of MBS funding for virtual care and telehealth consultations
- II. support the development of innovative models of consumer-centric care
- III. promote patient involvement in decision making
- IV. address access and equity issues faced by consumers in rural, remote, and underserved areas
- V. ease demand pressures on regional healthcare services
- VI. educate and train clinicians in best-practice delivery of virtual care



“As the leaders in healthcare delivered in a digital society, the Institute is ready to work with the new government to leverage our current learnings in the digital enablement of health and lead the desperately needed transformational change across the health and aged care sector,” Dr Schaper said.

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