



# Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide

## Authorised employees

### Audience

This information guide is for authorised employees who access or maintain patient records within a healthcare organisation participating in the Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service.

### Required reading

Make sure you have read the following material before reading this information guide.

- *Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide—Introduction and overview.*

### Your responsibilities as an authorised employee

Authorised employees are responsible for making sure patient information in their local software system is correct, up-to-date and has a healthcare identifier assigned to it. This will help make sure the right health information is associated with the right individual at the point of care.

Your duties as an authorised employee may include the following.

- Requesting and collecting the individual healthcare identifier (IHI) number of any new patients.
- Creating and updating unverified IHIs for patients who do not have an IHI, or who you can't find an IHI for (for example, a newborn baby or an overseas visitor).
- Creating and updating provisional IHIs for patients who can't be immediately identified. For example, an unconscious patient who is brought to a hospital and has no identification can have a provisional IHI created for them. Once they have regained consciousness or a family member identifies them, their provisional IHI can either be updated to an unverified IHI or merged with an existing verified IHI.
- Notifying the HI Service when patients are deceased.

Healthcare identifiers must be requested, collected and used in accordance with the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010*. A failure to do so can constitute an offence under the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Privacy Act 1988*.

### Registering as an authorised employee

Authorisation to access the HI Service will be provided by your organisation.

### Understanding individual healthcare identifiers

IHIs can have a status of verified, unverified or provisional within the HI Service.

#### Verified IHI

When an IHI has a verified status it means the HI Service Operator (Medicare Australia) has evidence of an individual's identity, such as a passport, birth certificate or driver's licence.

If an individual enrolls in the Medicare program or registers with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Medicare Australia will automatically allocate a verified IHI if an unverified IHI does not exist.

#### Unverified IHI

When an IHI has an unverified status, it means the healthcare identifier was created at a healthcare facility and the individual has not provided evidence of identity to Medicare Australia.

#### Provisional IHI

When an IHI has a provisional status it means the identifier was created at a healthcare facility when the patient was unable to identify themselves (for example, they were unconscious). Provisional IHIs are temporary and expire after 90 days of no activity. You can update a provisional IHI to an unverified IHI or merge it with an existing verified IHI using your software system.

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### Things to be aware of when using the HI Service

- It is important to make sure that identifying information used for the purposes of searching for an IHI is as accurate and complete as possible.
- The HI Service processes all searches in good faith and on the understanding you are using the information the patient has given you. For example, for personal reasons, a patient may choose to use a name other than their given name (known as a pseudonym) or choose to be anonymous when seeking healthcare. You must use the information the patient has given you to search for, or create an IHI, even if you are aware of their real identity.
- Access to IHIs in the HI Service are recorded in an audit log, which captures user information and interactions with the HI Service. This information can be retrieved at any time by the healthcare individual. Penalties for unauthorised access apply under the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*.
- If you are aware a patient's details are out-of-date and they are enrolled in Medicare, you should encourage them to contact Medicare Australia to have their details updated.
- If you suspect a patient has multiple IHIs, you should notify Medicare Australia. Medicare Australia will only merge an unverified IHI with a verified IHI where the patient's consent is provided.
- It is a matter for you to manage your patient records, including records where a patient appears to have multiple IHIs (such as a verified, unverified, or a provisional IHI) in accordance with the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*, the *Privacy Act 1988* and other relevant privacy laws.

An IHI is not required for a healthcare individual to receive treatment. You cannot refuse treatment for a person who does not have an IHI, does not provide enough information to create an IHI, or who chooses to seek care anonymously or pseudonymously (using a name other than their given name).

### Accessing the HI Service electronically

#### Authentication Certificate

As an authorised employee you will be able to access the HI Service using your organisation's authentication credentials.

The organisation access credentials are known as an Organisation Authentication Certificate or Organisation Public Key Infrastructure (PKI). This certificate is issued to an organisation after they have been successfully registered with the HI Service.

You can access the HI Service securely through your organisation's software system if it is compatible with the HI Service, or by using Medicare Australia's Health Professional Online Services (HPOS).

For information on developing software for the HI Service your OMO should contact your software vendor.

#### For more information

Online [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)

Email [healthcareidentifiers@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:healthcareidentifiers@medicareaustralia.gov.au)

Call **1300 361 457\***

\*Call charges apply.