



Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide

Individual healthcare provider

Audience

This information guide is for individuals who are:

- an individual healthcare provider registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), or
- a healthcare provider who is a member of a professional association that relates to the healthcare the member provides, and has uniform national membership requirements as outlined in the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010*.

Required reading

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

- *Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide—Introduction and Overview*.
- *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*.
- *Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010*.

Your responsibilities as an individual healthcare provider

As an individual healthcare provider registered with the HI Service you are responsible for keeping your personal information accurate and up-to-date, so you can be identified for the purposes of healthcare delivery.

In the HI Service you can update details including:

- your name
- registration details
- speciality details (the type of health services you provide)
- address
- contact details
- entries in the Healthcare Provider Directory.

Refer to the *Healthcare Identifier Service Information Guide – Introduction and overview* for information about the Healthcare Provider Directory.

To change information provided to the HI Service as part of your registration, you will need to provide Medicare Australia with certified copies of supporting documentation.

If you are registered through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) you need to notify AHPRA of any changes to your information. AHPRA will then inform Medicare Australia of these changes.

There is no limit to the amount of additional information you can provide about yourself, but you must provide an address, and a telephone number or email address that can be used by Medicare Australia to contact you. The details you provide should be consistent with how you are known in the community as this will make it easier for others to accurately identify you.

As an individual healthcare provider you can also:

- request, collect and use Individual Healthcare Identifiers (IHIs) from the HI Service for your patients
- create unverified and provisional IHIs in the HI Service
- use the Healthcare Provider Directory to obtain details of other healthcare providers for the purposes of securely sending health information such as discharge summaries, test requests or referrals.

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

You can also act as an authorised employee within the HI Service. Refer to the *Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide—Authorised employees* for more information about the responsibilities of this role.

Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide

Individual healthcare provider

If you are the owner of a small healthcare organisation you can also act as the responsible officer and organisation maintenance officer for your organisation. Refer to the *Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide—Responsible officer* and *Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide—Organisation maintenance officer* for more information about the responsibilities of these roles.

Registering as an individual healthcare provider

You can register as an individual healthcare provider with the HI Service in one of two ways.

- Through AHPRA, current membership boards are as follows:
 - Chiropractic Board of Australia
 - Dental Board of Australia
 - Medical Board of Australia (GPs and specialists)
 - Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
 - Optometry Board of Australia
 - Osteopathy Board of Australia
 - Pharmacy Board of Australia
 - Physiotherapy Board of Australia
 - Podiatry Board of Australia
 - Psychology Board of Australia.
- Through the HI Service Operator (Medicare Australia).

AHPRA will provide Medicare Australia with information for their registrants and notify registrants of their Healthcare Provider Identifier-Individual (HPI-I) number.

Understanding individual healthcare identifiers

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 are 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.

Things to be aware of when using the HI Service

- It is important to make sure 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 ensure you 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.

Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide

Individual healthcare provider

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, who 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 tokens and certificates

Once you have been successfully registered with the HI Service you will be issued with an Individual Authentication Token or Individual Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), which will allow you to securely access the HI Service and protect the exchange of information. If you already have a token your permissions will be updated to allow you to perform your duties in the HI Service.

You can also access the HI Service as an authorised employee using your organisation's access credentials, referred to as an Organisation Authentication Certificate or Organisation PKI. This certificate will be issued to an organisation after it has been successfully registered with the HI Service and a request for the certificate has been made.

Once you have your Individual Authentication Token, or your organisation has its Organisation Authentication Certificate, 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 contact your software vendor.

For more information

Online www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

Email healthcareidentifiers@medicareaustralia.gov.au

Call 1300 361 457*

*Call charges apply.