



Media Release

19 April 2013

Invest in education to stop billions of unnecessary waste

The importance of a health informatics literate health workforce

Over the past decade billions have been pumped into e-health projects with barely any money invested in the e-health workforce.

This is one of the reasons listed in a new paper released by Australasian College of Health Informatics (ACHI) and Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA) for recent failure of many high-profile e-health projects.

Without an e-health and health informatics literate workforce, we are unable to implement or evaluate the real world success of e-health programs in terms of patient outcomes and service efficiency.

This is a problem for the industry as "Governments remain wary of investing in ICT unless its value to the community can be demonstrated."

The paper, *E-Health: A complex intervention in a complex system*, was created in response to the article *Why e-health is so hard* by Professor Enrico Coiera in the Medical Journal of Australia on 4 March 2013.

In their paper Peter Williams of ACHI and Dr Louise Schaper of HISA point out that Australia is lagging behind the US and UK in health informatics education, recognition, and research.

Both HISA and ACHI are launching programs to combat this.

ACHI has recently established a Program Evaluation Sub-Committee which includes an objective to collate, promulgate and report on evidence of major e-health initiatives.

HISA and ACHI are working together with HIMAA to launch a health informatics certification program in July 2013.

These are important steps towards preventing future ICT failures but, the paper states; coordinated national effort is needed to ensure the success of these programs.

"The investment in an e-health and health informatics literate healthcare workforce and investing in creating positions for specialist health informaticians is vitally needed."

"We know that engaging with clinicians and health informaticians early in the process will improve the likelihood of delivering positive impacts of e-health initiatives".

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