

My Health Record: Train the trainer opportunities

Daniel McDonald
Darling Downs Health

MY HEALTH RECORD: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER OPPORTUNITIES

Daniel McDonald

Librarian, Darling Downs Health

Daniel.mcdonald@health.qld.gov.au

Abstract

Opportunities will exist in 2020 for Health Library staff to attend train-the-trainer education sessions regarding "My Health Record". These are library focused, with funding available, and are potentially very beneficial as health libraries consider ways to expand their contributions to consumer health and digital literacy efforts.

Text

An overview (Smith, 2009) into the state of consumer health information in the UK observed that "Health literacy is not just about reading, writing and numeracy ability or applying literacy skills to a healthcare setting. Health has its own specific language, environment and processes; so, an understanding of everyday information is not necessarily enough to enable an individual to make sense of their health needs, treatment and choices. It is important to also remember that even literate people may have trouble understanding or interpreting some aspects of modern health care." This overview concluded that "Communication between health professionals and patients, and between health educators and the public, is critical in order for consumer health information to have the ability to improve health outcomes. Further, especially local, investment into the production, distribution and delivery of consumer health information is recommended".

Understanding health's language, environment and processes... interpreting modern healthcare... communicating health to the public at the local level. These are all principles which are central to ALIA's current partnership with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA). In 2019 around \$1 million in funding was granted to the Australian Public Library Alliance and Health Libraries Australia to run train-the-trainer programs targeted specifically at increasing awareness of, and functional use with, the federal government's "My Health Record". My Health Record is an online

summary of an individual's key health information. It may contain information from healthcare professionals such as hospital discharge summaries, reports from tests and scans, medications prescribed, referral letters; information from Medicare or the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, organ donation decisions, immunisations; and information from individuals such as emergency contact details, allergy information, or an advance care plan. Though not without some controversy and reservations, My Health Record has the potential to improve care integration, enhance health information flow, and enable Australians to be more literate about their health and the care they receive. As such, it is important for individuals to be aware of, and to be able to access and use, My Health Record.

The ADHA, who are responsible for My Health Record, have recognised through their grant funding the unique capability the library sector has in reaching and educating the wider community, particularly those who may find it challenging interacting with digital and/or health and/or government information. The State Library of Queensland (SLQ) has developed a one-day train-the-trainer session, with the primary intention of upskilling public library staff to answer rudimentary questions about My Health Record, and to incorporate training about My Health Record into their current and future slate of classes offered to their local users. In late 2019 SLQ conducted six pilots for this training, two in Western Australia and four in Queensland. The sessions cover in some depth what My Health Record is and is not, and how best to communicate to the public how and why they might use My Health Record. Print and electronic brochures are also provided as complementary education and information sources.

Though this training is aimed primarily at the public library sector, health and hospital librarians, alongside staff from Primary Health Networks, public health units, NDIS agencies and the like have all attended some of the pilot training sessions. Attending these sessions is potentially very valuable for health librarians, whether they are located in hospitals or government health agencies or community health information agencies. Health librarians can offer significant input during the workshop discussions, providing a richer and more detailed context about hospitals and how the wider health service industry works. They can also provide insight into the complexities of health data and health information and health evidence and how they are generated and distributed and interpreted.

As well, health librarians often have access to different sections of the community than even public libraries. As such they can work with consumer liaison or clinical governance colleagues to deliver programs which ensure those from the community

engaging with hospitals are aware of, and upskilled in, My Health Record. This can have flow on benefits for the institution as well as the community, generating evidence in support of strategic goals and accreditation requirements concerning consumer health literacy. On top of all this, opportunities for intra and inter professional education are rare. Taking advantage of training like this almost always has merit, providing cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences and the sharing of frustrations and solutions.

My Health Record train-the-trainer training (pause to untie tongue) will continue to be rolled out through 2020, and is most likely coming to a public library service near you. Funding is available through the ADHA grant for health library staff to attend a session. Keep an eye on ALIA/HLA communication channels for specific details when they become available. The author can also be contacted for more information.

References

1. Smith S, Duman M. (2009). The state of consumer health information: an overview. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*. 26(4), 260-78.
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