

DIGITAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

Version	
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Contents

- Executive Summary3
- The Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network4
- Background and context5
- Digital Health Plan Strategic Overview 2022-20258
- Strategic Priorities9
- Digital Health Implementation Plan 2022-2025 10

Executive Summary

Digital Health has the potential to revolutionise the way people worldwide access healthcare. It supports higher standards in health and promotes overall health and wellbeing. (World Health Organization, 2019)

Our overarching intent of the CESPHN Digital Health Plan is to normalise the use of digital health in primary care.

COVID-19 confirmed the role of digital health solutions in driving more person centred approaches to health care. Gains achieved over the last 2 years include the use of telehealth, electronic prescriptions, greater use of My Health Record, development of virtual care services and increased capacity in the use of remote monitoring devices.

Digital health systems are driving much of the reform in Australia's health system. The Australian Government's Draft 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan seeks to strengthen person care through embedding digital health service delivery while emphasising the need for partnerships between consumers and clinicians.

The CESPHN Digital Health framework seeks to achieve the objectives outlined in the [CESPHN Strategic Plan 2022-2024](#) by supporting delivery of digital health solutions that improve standards of care by health care providers to health consumers.

Underpinning delivery is the Quadruple Aim; improving patient experience, reducing costs for provider organisations and consumers and advancing population health, and improving the provider experience.

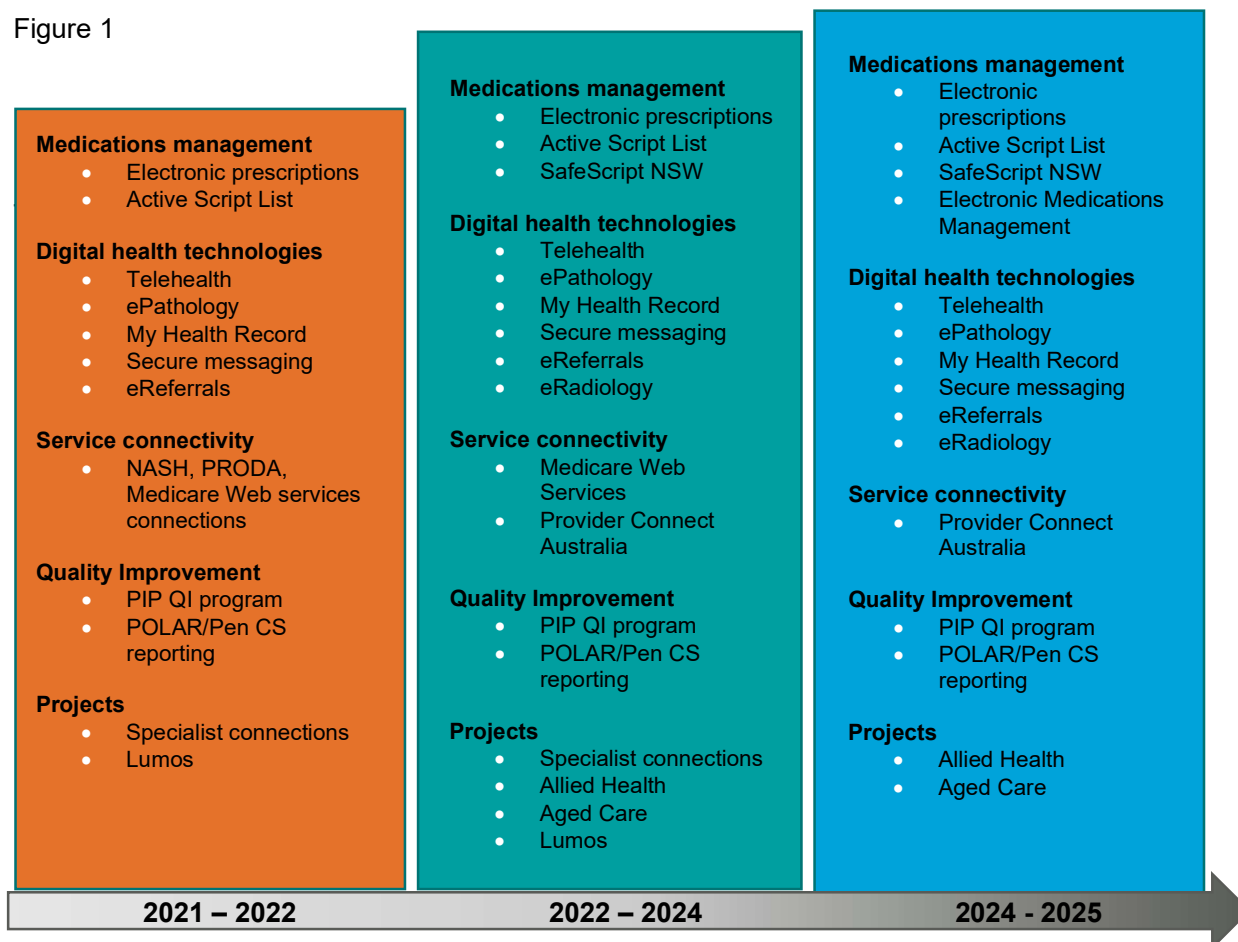
The digital health strategic plan 2022-2025 is structured around four strategic priorities of:

- empowering the primary care workforce; through communications, education, and digital health support to embed initiatives into routine primary health care.
- using data to inform practice; with tailored analysis, tracking and reporting of data used to inform quality improvement in practices.
- collaboration with our partners; through working together on the consolidation of electronic clinical communications, sharing data and expanding the use of digital health technologies.
- embedding digital health into all PHN activities; through strategic engagement with all staff across CESPHN, supporting commissioned services and embedding digital health within PHN programs.

The CESPHN Digital Plan 2022-2025 is ambitious and seeks to drive change toward more person centred approaches that results in improved practice. Our Digital Health Roadmap for 2022-2025 is summarised below in Figure 1.

Central and Eastern Sydney Digital Health Roadmap 2022-2025

Figure 1



The Central and Eastern Sydney PHN

Our vision is better health and wellbeing for all of the people who live and work across our region. We work to achieve this by working directly with all key players including general practitioners, allied health, nurses, secondary care providers, local health districts and specialty health networks, local communities, and non-government organisations to ensure improved health outcomes for people living and working in our region.

Our activities

- Each year we undertake a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the key health and health service needs of people in our region. This information is used to identify opportunities and to prioritise our activities.
- We provide programs and services that strengthen general practice and allied health services, including practice management support and continuing professional development. We also provide a range of programs focused on delivering integrated care with our local health districts and specialty health.

- Our region, our community

The CESPHN region includes central and eastern Sydney and the remote Norfolk and Lord Howe islands. Our boundaries align with those of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) and Sydney Local Health District (SLHD). CESPHN is the second largest of the 31 PHNs by population, with a resident population of 1.67 million in 2020 which includes 17,468 Aboriginal people.

We have a large non-resident population with nearly 500,000 additional people entering our region daily for work, study or visiting. Our region is characterised by high cultural diversity and population growth with 40% of our community born overseas; 38% speak a language other than English at home; and 7% do not speak English well or at all. Our region's population is expected to reach more than 1.85 million by 2031, an increase of 28 per cent or more than 400,000 people.

Our workforce

As at September 2021, there were 607 general practices operating within our region and this includes one Aboriginal Medical Service. Of those, two-thirds (66.6%) were accredited or registered for accreditation. In 2020 there were 2,177 general practitioners (GPs) and approximately 175 trainees working in the CESPHN region. There has been a 16.2% increase in the number of GPs in the CESPHN region since 2013 a trend that is expected to continue given our projected population increases.

Background and Context

What is Digital Health?

Digital health is the wide range of technologies in healthcare that connects and empowers people and populations to manage health and wellness.

For healthcare professionals' digital health can provide a helicopter type view of patient health through integrated, interoperable, digitally-enabled care environments. For consumers, it can empower them to make better-informed decisions about their own health and provide options for facilitating prevention, early diagnosis of life-threatening diseases, and management of chronic conditions outside of traditional health care settings.

Another component of digital health is data. Of high value and benefit to all key stakeholders is unlocking insights from health data sets. Interconnected, interoperable, and accessible real time data can inform safer delivery and better quality healthcare.

It can also support health system efficiencies resulting in time savings for clinicians, a reduction in unnecessary duplication of investigations and avoided hospital admissions. However, fundamental to all data is coding and clean data.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has identified digital health as one of seven priorities for PHNs. Specifically, our task is to assist healthcare providers making meaningful use of eHealth systems, in order to streamline the flow of relevant patient information across the local health providers and drive improved health outcomes.

PHNs continue to provide support for digital health and the My Health Record system, with an increased emphasis on data quality. This supports another core objective of PHNs, to support general practice in attaining the highest standard in safety and quality through showcasing and dissemination research and evidence of best practice, which includes collecting and reporting data to support continuous improvement.

DIGITAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

Digital health is considered essential to enable an integrated and efficient healthcare system, that empowers providers and patients alike. It aims to bring computer technology, information science, and healthcare providers together into a synergic relationship that helps patients and healthcare providers to make informed decisions regarding care.

The Quadruple Aim of Healthcare (Bodenheimer & Sinsky, 2014) framework is a widely accepted model for health services. At the core of this is a well-functioning digital health system that sits alongside four elements of:

- improving the patient experience of care
- improving the health of populations
- reducing the per capita cost of health care
- improving the work life of health care providers, clinicians, and staff.

Embedded within this framework is that of Person-Centred Care. Many healthcare organisations find it difficult to change service delivery to a model with the patient at the centre. A range of PHNs are implementing person centred care programs to assist primary care to make these changes, including CESPHN’s Person Centred Medical Neighbourhood (PCMN) program. Like the Quadruple Aim, a strong digital health system is a key step in moving to true patient centred care.

Australia’s National Digital Health Strategy, developed by the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) informs the digital health activities of each PHN. The Strategy currently contains seven strategic priority outcomes as per the diagram below:



The [eHealth Strategy for NSW Health 2016 – 2026](#) established seven key focus areas including core clinical systems, integrated care solutions, workforce and business management systems, data and analytics, access to information, infrastructure, security and intelligence and innovation.

Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Local Health Districts also have individual Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies which describe the activities of the LHDs in implementing the activities of the NSW eHealth Strategy.

Our digital health strategic plan represents CESPHNs commitment to embedding digital health within the local primary care sector and will guide future investment to ensure these priorities are realised. Our strategy reflects continual consultation with CESPHN stakeholders including GPs, allied health and medical specialists, Local Health Districts and Networks.

Our strategy builds on leadership from the Australian Digital Health Agency, eHealth NSW and evidence regarding the benefits associated with integration of digital health solutions.

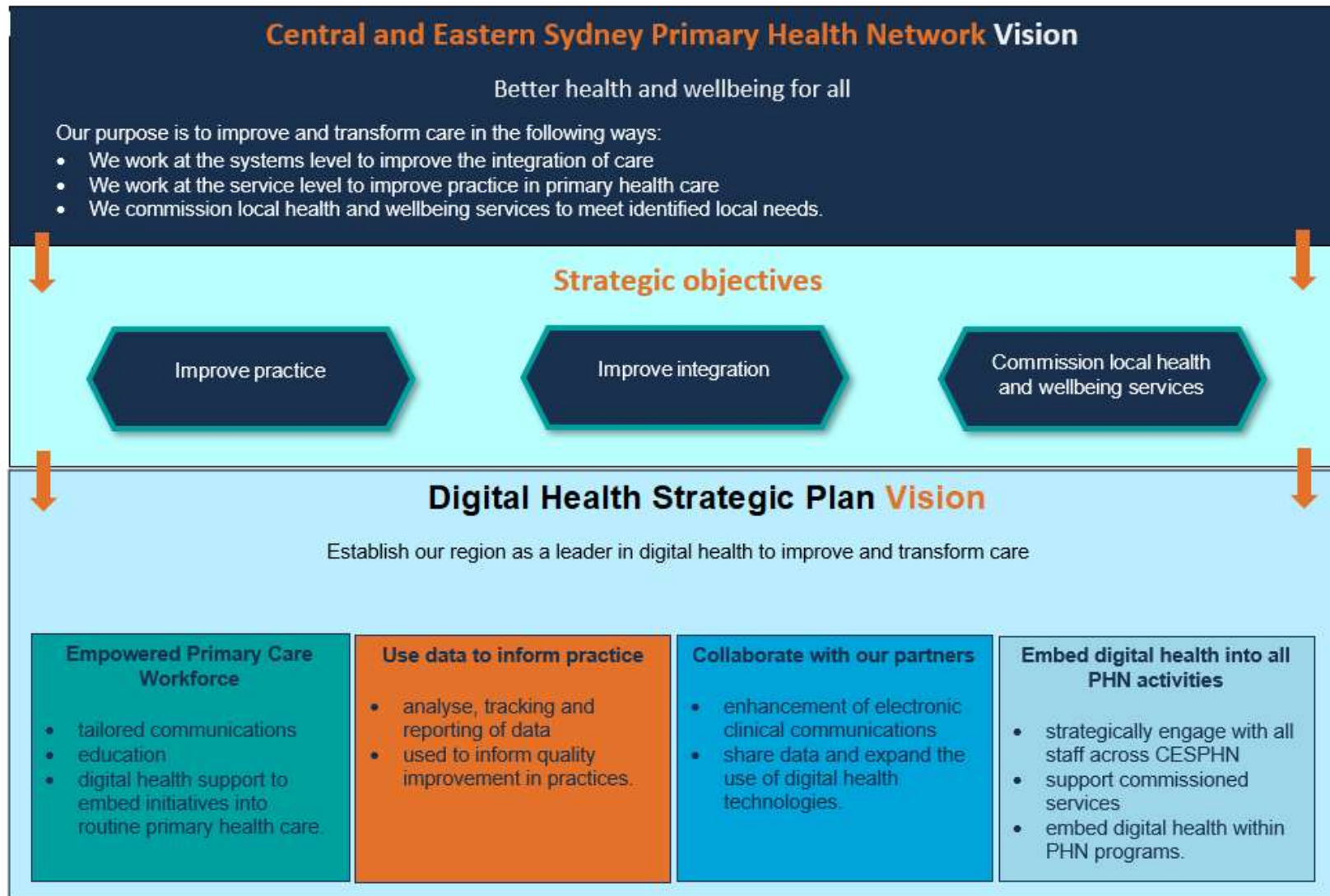
CESPHNs digital health goals integrate with the organisation’s strategic objectives and help our vision of *‘Better health and wellbeing for all’*.

Strategic priorities

Key strategic priorities in CESPHNs Digital Health Strategic Plan (DHSP) have been aligned to national and state priorities to achieve widespread digital literacy, sustainability, and the confidence to meaningfully use digital health and technologies amongst local stakeholders. At the centred of our strategy are our key stakeholders of consumers, carers, clinicians, LHD partners and the primary care workforce.

CESPHNs work in digital health will assist to improve health service delivery by leveraging digital innovation, adopting new ways of working to achieve outcomes of improved population health for communities and decreased cost burdens for public and private.

Digital Health Strategic Plan Overview 2022 - 2025



Strategic priorities

The Digital Health Strategic Plan brings together digital health needs and opportunities identified through continuous stakeholder consultation and alignment to national digital health priorities. They are grouped into the following strategic areas of:

- **Empowered primary care workforce**

Pharmacies, Allied Health, Private Specialists and Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) in digital health uptake and use in initiatives such as telehealth, My Health Record, electronic prescriptions, electronic referrals, secure messaging, and other emerging

- **Data to inform practice**

- Encourage sharing of data in practices for the PHN to provide reliable evidence-based
- insights to inform and validate health service improvement and support decision-making.

- **Collaborate with our partners**

- Work towards the consolidation of electronic clinical documentation, uniform use of My Health Record, electronic prescriptions, secure messaging and increase adoption of eReferrals through engaging with industry partners and inclusion of consumers to enhance virtual care.

- **Embed digital health into PHN activities**

- Support for PHN commissioned projects, engage with high-quality general practices through the Person Centred Medical Neighbourhood Program (PCMN) and leverage the work of other PHNs.

The scope of the digital health strategic plan encompasses:

- National digital health priorities
- Primary care priorities of the Australian Government
- Digital health plans and aspirations of strategic partners
- Local digital health activities that support and enable meaningful use of digital health
- Embedding digital health within PHN programs
- Consideration of the digital health initiatives of other PHNs

A detailed implementation plan on how CESPAN will deliver initiatives against each of the strategic areas is provided in the following document.

References:

Bodenheimer, T., & Sinsky, C. (2014). From Triple to Quadruple Aim: Care of the Patient Requires Care of the Provider. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 12(6), 573–576. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.1713>

World Health Organization. (2019, October 10). *Digital health*. https://www.who.int/health-topics/digital-health#tab=tab_1