

Electronic Medical Record Exchange



Electronic Medical Record Exchange (EMRX) is an initiative by the Ministry of Health to share electronic medical records (EMR) across healthcare establishments. It was started in 2004 with the two public healthcare clusters – Singapore Health Services and National Health Group – to enable sharing across all public hospitals and polyclinics in Singapore. Moving forward MOH is extending EMRX to the private and charity healthcare establishments in progressive phases to enable greater continuity of care.

EMRX provides medical staff involved in your treatment with quick access to your EMR. This ensures that care provided is safe, of a high quality and customized to your needs.

This pamphlet will tell you about the EMRX, and where to find out more information should you have any concerns.

'It's given emergency doctors tremendous confidence in treating patients with long and complicated medical histories, who were treated in other hospitals.'

Dr Lee Shu Woan, who uses the system at least five times a week.



What are electronic medical records (EMR)?

Every time we visit a doctor, he will keep a detailed record of the encounter, such as diagnoses, test results and medication prescribed. These notes make up your medical record.

In the past, medical records were maintained on paper and kept in individual folders by the hospital or clinic which you visit. If you visited another hospital or clinic, the hospital or clinic would maintain a separate set of records. Records of your previous visits in another healthcare institution were not available unless specially requested for by your doctor.

Electronic medical records (EMR) are a better way of storing your medical information through information technology (IT). Unlike paper records, EMR can be:

- Shared across healthcare institutions.
- Made more secure through appropriate IT access and security safeguards.

Why are your medical records important?

Every one of us is unique. We react differently to medications and treatments. Medical records provide the medical staff treating you with your medical history, drug allergies and other essential information. This allows them to make the best assessment of your current condition and provide care that suits you best.



What is EMRX?

Electronic Medical Record Exchange (EMRX) is an initiative by the Ministry of Health to share electronic medical records (EMR) across healthcare establishments.

What are the benefits of EMRX?

EMRX enables EMR to be shared across all healthcare establishments, starting with public hospitals and polyclinics and progressively to healthcare establishments in the private and charity sectors. With quick and accurate access to your essential medical information, medical staff involved in your treatment can customize treatment to better meet your unique needs, wherever you are. This:

- Improves the quality of care provided, ensuring that you get well faster.
- Increases safety. For example, ready access to information about your drug allergies and current medications enables doctors to prescribe medication accurately and reduce unnecessary side effects.
- Reduces cost for you as doctors can now view the results of any recent blood tests, x-rays investigations online, thereby reducing the need to repeat tests.

How EMR could save lives

80-year-old Mr Mohamad was rushed to the Emergency Department because he fell and injured his head. Unfortunately, his son-in-law who brought him to hospital, could not tell doctors if Mr Mohamad was on any medication or had any existing medical condition.

Through the EMR system, doctors quickly found out that Mr Mohamad was on blood thinning medication, which could lead to internal bleeding in the brain. Armed with the latest information about his medical condition, they quickly decided on the appropriate emergency treatment. This potentially helped save Mr Mohamad's life because the doctors could take his medical condition into account when treating him.



We are ordinary people. We don't know what medication we are taking or our condition. At least with the system, the doctors will know immediately.

Mr Mohamad's son-in-law

What medical information is shared?

The following medical information is shared on EMRX:

- Discharge Summary – this summarises one's recent hospitalisation record including the treatment received and clinical course.
- Laboratory test results (e.g. Blood test results).
- X-ray and other radiological test results.
- Medical operation reports
- Drug Allergies
- Medicines prescribed
- Cardiac reports
- Emergency Department reports

More types of medical information which are needed for continuity of care will be added on to EMRX progressively.

Who can access my records?

Only the doctors and healthcare staff who are involved in your treatment will have access to your EMR.

How do you keep my records safe?

All medical staff are bound by law and professional ethics to keep your medical information strictly confidential. As EMR are computer records, unauthorised access is an offence under section 3 (1) of the Computer Misuse act, Cap 50A. Under this Act, healthcare establishments are treated as "protected computer" installations. The enhanced punishment for offences covered under Section 9 of the Act attracts a fine not exceeding \$100,000 and/or jail of up to 20 years for unauthorised access to your data.

To Find Out More

For more information about EMRX, please visit Ministry of Health's website at www.moh.gov.sg

Healthcare institutions provide training to future generations of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. Thus, there may be a need to view medical records for training purposes. But those who view such records are under a legal obligation not to disclose them to anyone. Patient confidentiality and privacy is also respected in medical training.

There is always the slight risk that there may be unauthorised access (in the case of computer records, for example by unauthorised medical personnel, to by hackers into the electronic medical records system), but you have our assurance that we will do all we can to protect your patient records.