

Data governance in the community pharmacy setting



Data governance in the community pharmacy setting refers to the framework of policies, procedures, and standards that ensure the secure, accurate, and ethical management of health data. It guides pharmacy technicians and support staff on when and how they are able to access digital health systems and consumer information while working in the community pharmacy setting, ensuring compliance with privacy laws and professional standards. Effective data governance supports safe and informed decision-making, protects consumer privacy, and enhances the quality of care delivered in the pharmacy environment.

Digital health tools

Digital health tools such as electronic prescriptions (e-prescriptions), My Health Record, Active Script List (ASL), and Real-Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) are used in community pharmacy every day and are integral to appropriate data governance.

Digital health tool	When should it be accessed in the pharmacy?	How can pharmacy support staff use it?
Electronic prescriptions	When a consumer presents an electronic prescription token or requests electronic prescription services.	Assist in retrieving, queueing, and dispensing electronic prescriptions under pharmacist supervision.
My Health Record	To check for allergies, adverse reactions, recent test results, and medicine history before dispensing, especially for consumers with complex histories or multiple prescribers.	Support pharmacists by verifying consumer details such as name, DOB and Medicare details in the dispensing software for the pharmacist to access the consumer's My Health Record.
Active Script List	When a consumer asks the pharmacist to access, view and manage their ASL and access their electronic prescription tokens as requested.	Assisting the pharmacist to register a patient for an ASL. Support staff can also assist consumers in accessing their ASL using appropriate ID and queueing these prescriptions for dispensing under supervision of the pharmacist.
Real-time prescription monitoring	Before dispensing monitored medicines to check for recent supply and prevent misuse or abuse.	Alert pharmacists to RTPM alerts or flags in the dispensing system. Always refer to the pharmacist if there is anything of concern in the consumer's history.

Note: These tools may not contain a complete consumer history, always consult with the consumer, pharmacist and prescriber where appropriate.

The role of pharmacy support staff

Pharmacy support staff play a vital role in maintaining data accuracy, maintaining best practices for data governance, and supporting pharmacists and consumers. Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring consumer details are correctly entered in dispensing software (name, DOB, Medicare) to avoid duplication or My Health Record upload errors.
- Supporting pharmacists by preparing accurate records for My Health Record uploads.
- Assisting consumers with accessing their My Health Record and ASL functionality via the my health app.
- Participate in My Health Record Assisted Registration if trained and authorised.

Consumer privacy

Pharmacy support staff must handle consumer health information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, ensuring data is collected, stored, and shared securely and only with appropriate consent. Staff must follow protocols for accessing digital health tools, respect consumer privacy settings, and never retain sensitive information. Adhering to these standards protects consumer trust and supports high-quality care.

Pharmacy support staff must always use secure logins and follow pharmacy protocols for accessing systems like My Health Record or ASL under direct pharmacist supervision in accordance with their pharmacy policy. To maintain appropriate data governance, it is important to:

- always verify consumer identity and details
- use secure logins and destroy access codes after use
- not retain or share sensitive information
- follow pharmacy protocols and privacy laws such as the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Pharmacy support staff must not access clinical data unless authorised and must follow privacy protocols.



Frequently asked questions from consumers

- ***Should My Health Record be checked every time a consumer presents to the pharmacy?***

My Health Record should be checked when clinically relevant, such as during medicine dispensing, vaccinations, or when consumers present with complex histories.

- ***Can support staff upload to My Health Record?***

Only pharmacists or authorised staff using compliant software may upload to My Health Record. If a prescriber hasn't uploaded consumer information, pharmacists should not upload it unless clinically appropriate and within scope.

- ***What is considered sensitive health information?***

Sensitive information can include any data about a person's health, medicines, medical history, or identifiers like Medicare or IHI numbers. It must be handled securely and only accessed when necessary.

- ***Can I access a consumer's My Health Record without their knowledge?***

No, access must be for the purpose of providing that consumer with healthcare, and provided it is in accordance with any access controls. In addition to clinicians, a healthcare organisation may authorise other staff to access the system as part of their role in healthcare delivery.

If a consumer's My Health Record is accessed unintentionally, report it immediately to your pharmacist or manager. Unauthorised access must be documented and may require formal reporting under privacy laws.

- ***What should I do if a consumer refuses to share their health information?***

Respect their decision, consumers have the right to control who accesses their My Health Record and other digital tools. Offer to explain the benefits but never pressure them.







- ***Can I correct a consumer's personal details in the system?***

Yes, if authorised and trained. Always verify changes with the consumer and notify the pharmacist if the correction affects clinical records or uploads as incorrect details prevent uploads. Always verify spelling, DOB, and identifiers before dispensing.

- ***How do I know if I'm authorised to assist with digital health tools?***

You must be trained and authorised by your pharmacy. Always work under the supervision of a pharmacist in accordance with your pharmacy's protocols.

Want to learn more? Scan below to access more of PSA's resources on digital health tools for pharmacy support staff:

Electronic prescriptions	My Health Record	Active Script List	Real-time prescription monitoring
Online learning module 	Online learning module 	Online learning module 	Online learning module 
Quick reference guide 	Quick reference guide 	Quick reference guide 