

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



Wednesday, 8 February 2023

## NEW HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM TO SAVE LIVES

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Victorian patients get the best possible care by establishing secure health information sharing arrangements across the public health system.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas will today introduce into the Victorian Parliament the *Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023* which will enable hospitals and health services to quickly access accurate patient information in one centralised location.

The system will only be accessible by clinical staff and provide access to vital medical information irrespective of where the patient previously received care, which in an emergency could be lifesaving.

The new arrangements will be useful for patients with chronic conditions or in emergency situations who are often too unwell or unable to communicate to healthcare workers their allergies, past diagnostic tests, and treatments.

It will also assist patients with language barriers, provide better support for Telehealth and virtual care, and help Ambulance Victoria make more accurate assessments of patient care needs.

Currently, a patient's clinical information is stored in different places which slows down diagnosis and treatment. Requesting information from multiple different hospitals manually can be a lengthy process for doctors and nurses, but these changes will create a stronger and more connected system.

Similar information sharing systems are already operating in other parts of Australia and this legislation will bring Victoria into line with other states and territories.

The new system will have strict security and privacy controls, including safeguards to record where and when information about a patient is shared. Unauthorised access, use or disclosure of information from the system will see offenders face strict penalties.

The legislation is the latest implementation of recommendations from the *Targeting Zero* report on the safety and quality of care in Victoria. It called for all major hospitals to have electronic health record systems that can share patient information.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Secure health information sharing will deliver Victorians the same benefits that patients around the country are already getting, ensuring they receive the best possible care."*

*"This legislation includes strict rules around who can access patient information and why, so Victorians can rest easy knowing their health data is secure."*