



# Individual Healthcare Provider User Guide

## AUDIENCE

This guide is for:

- individual healthcare providers registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), or
- healthcare providers who are members of a professional association that relates to the healthcare services they provide, and has uniform national membership requirements as outlined in the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010*.

## REQUIRED READING

Make sure you have read the following material before reading this guide.

*Healthcare Identifiers Service Information Guide - Introduction and Overview.*

*Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010.*

*Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010.*

## REGISTERING AS AN INDIVIDUAL HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Individuals who provide healthcare to the public can register for a Healthcare Provider Individual-Identifier (HPI-I). To get an HPI-I, a health worker needs to be registered with a national registration board, such as AHPRA, or meet criteria outlined in Section 9A (1) and (2) of the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*. If you are unsure if you are eligible for a HPI-I contact us. You don't need an HPI-I to be able to claim Medicare benefits.

The current membership boards recognised by AHPRA are as follows:

- Chiropractic Board of Australia
- Dental Board of Australia
- Medical Board of Australia (GPs and specialists)
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- Optometry Board of Australia
- Osteopathy Board of Australia
- Pharmacy Board of Australia
- Physiotherapy Board of Australia
- Podiatry Board of Australia
- Psychology Board of Australia.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners
- Chinese medicine practitioners
- Medical radiation practitioners
- Occupational therapists.

If you're registered with AHPRA, you have automatically been given an HPI-I. To find out what your number is contact Human Services or AHPRA.

If you're eligible for a HPI-I but you aren't registered with AHPRA you can request a HPI-I by completing an application form available online at [humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals](https://humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals) then go to **Healthcare Identifiers Service**

If you're the owner of a small healthcare organisation you can also act as the responsible officer and organisation maintenance officer for your organisation. See the *Responsible Officer Guide* and *Organisation Maintenance Officer Guide* for more information about the responsibilities of these roles.

## UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL HEALTHCARE IDENTIFIERS

There are three types of individual healthcare identifier (IHI), verified, unverified or provisional.

### Verified IHI

When an IHI has a verified status it means we have seen evidence of an individual's identity, such as a passport, birth certificate or driver's licence. When a person enrolls in the Medicare program or registers with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, we will automatically allocate a verified IHI if an unverified IHI does not exist.

### Unverified IHI

When an IHI has an unverified status, it means a healthcare identifier was created for an individual at a healthcare facility, such as a hospital, and we haven't been provided with evidence of their identity.

### Provisional IHI

When an IHI has a provisional status it means the identifier was created at a healthcare facility when an individual was unable to identify themselves (for example, because they were unconscious). Provisional IHIs are temporary and expire after 90 days of no activity. You can update a provisional IHI to an unverified IHI or merge it with an existing verified IHI using your software system.

## Your responsibilities as an individual healthcare provider

As a healthcare provider registered with the HI Service you are responsible for keeping your personal information accurate and up-to-date, so you can be correctly identified.

In the HI Service you can update details, including:

- your name
- registration details
- speciality details (the type of health services you provide)
- address
- contact details

- entries in the Healthcare Provider Directory.

To change information provided to the HI Service as part of your registration, you will need to provide us with certified copies of supporting documentation.

If you're registered for the HI Service through AHPRA you need to tell them if any of your details change. AHPRA will then let us know. If you have provided additional information about your AHPRA registration to us using HPOS or have registered with the HI Service in a medical field not covered by AHPRA, you can update your details with us directly.

There is no limit on the amount of additional information you can provide about yourself, but you must provide an address and a telephone number or email address that we can use to contact you. The details you provide should be consistent with how you are known in the community as this will make it easier for others to accurately identify you.

As an individual healthcare provider you can:

- request, collect and use the Individual Healthcare Identifiers (IHIs) of your patients
- create unverified and provisional IHIs in the HI Service and use the Healthcare Provider Directory to get details of other healthcare providers for the purposes of securely sending health information such as discharge summaries, test requests or referrals.

Healthcare identifiers must be requested, collected and used in accordance with the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Healthcare Identifiers Regulations 2010*. Failure to do so is an offence under the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010* and the *Privacy Act 1988*.

## THINGS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN USING THE HI SERVICE

- It's important to make sure the information you use to search for an IHI, such as a person's date of birth is accurate and complete.
- The HI Service processes all searches in good faith and on the understanding you are using the information the patient has given you in the right way. You must use the information a patient has given you to search for, or create an IHI in the HI system, even if you are aware of their real identity. For example, if a patient chooses to use a name other than their given name or to access healthcare services anonymously.
- Each time an IHI is searched for and retrieved in the system, the details of who requested the identifier is recorded in an audit log. Individuals registered for Online Services can view their IHI history online. Penalties for unauthorised access apply under the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*.
- If you know a patient's details are out-of-date and they are enrolled in Medicare, encourage them to update their details with us.
- If you suspect a patient has multiple IHIs, tell us.
- We will only merge unverified and verified IHIs with a patient's permission.
- A person does not need their IHI to access healthcare services and shouldn't be refused treatment if they don't have an IHI, can't provide enough information to create an IHI or choose to seek care anonymously or using a name other than their given name.

## ACCESSING THE HI SERVICE ELECTRONICALLY

Once you have successfully registered with the HI Service you will be issued with a Department of Human Services Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) Individual certificate, which will allow you to securely access the HI Service and protect the exchange of information. If you already have a certificate your permissions will be updated to allow you to perform your duties in the HI Service.

You can also access the HI Service as an authorised employee using your organisation's access credentials, referred to as a Department of Human Services PKI Location certificate. This certificate will be issued to an organisation after it has been successfully registered with the HI Service and a request for the certificate has been made.

Once you have your Department of Human Services Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) Individual certificate, or your organisation has its Department of Human Services PKI Location certificate, you can access the HI Service securely through your organisation's software system if it is compatible with the HI Service, or by using our Health Professional Online Services (HPOS).

If a PKI certificate was not requested when you were registered for a HPI-I you can get one by completing an application form available online at [humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals](http://humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals) then **Healthcare Identifiers Service**

**Note:** for information about how you can register for and access the eHealth Record system go to [ehealth.gov.au](http://ehealth.gov.au)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Online [humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals](http://humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals) then go to **Healthcare Identifiers Service**

Email [healthcareidentifiers@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:healthcareidentifiers@humanservices.gov.au)

Call **1300 361 457\***

\*Call charges apply.

