

Digital technologies are now embedded into almost all aspects of modern life and Primary Health Care (PHC) is no exception. Adopted by most PHC providers, digital technologies are now viewed as an essential resource, but how we assess the extent of their adoption and integration will be key to getting the most out of what digital healthcare has to offer.

Released today by the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's (AHHA) Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, the Perspectives Brief '[Digital maturity models for primary health care](#)' explores the role of digital maturity assessments in assisting PHC providers to fully leverage available digital assets and technologies for the benefit of both their patient base and workforce.

'As we move towards more integrated healthcare systems, digital technologies are an essential resource for primary health care,' says AHHA Chief Executive Kylie Woolcock.

'While the potential benefits of digital technology and information systems among healthcare providers are undeniable, it's important to acknowledge that there is still considerable variability in their adoption and integration across services. This raises concerns for a potential 'digital divide'.

'Assessing providers' digital infrastructure maturity is imperative for PHC stakeholders and funders, and comprehensive tools are needed to evaluate the steps being taken towards achieving digital health maturity.'

'There is a limited number of digital maturity models available for the healthcare setting, and even fewer specifically designed for PHC. This brief outlines the benefits of using two previously existing models as well as a newly developed model, the Digital Maturity Assessment of Primary Healthcare Providers (DMAPP).'

The DMAPP model was developed by researchers from Deakin University, in consultation with Western Victoria PHN to assess pertinent aspects of digital health infrastructure and intervention within the PHC environment.

'Understanding the readiness and willingness of PHC providers to adopt and integrate digital technologies is critical, and maturity models can help with this assessment.'

'However, there are also risks to consider, such as variable digital literacy among healthcare workers and patients. Limited or no digital literacy can lead to isolation and marginalisation of intended users, potentially hindering adoption of digital health and contributing to health inequalities.'

'DMAPP encompasses the three core pillars of primary health care - multi-sectoral policy and action, public health functions, and empowered communities - as well as key components from established digital maturity models. This comprehensive framework not only facilitates the assessment of digital maturity among healthcare providers but also supports their progress towards achieving it.'

The online version of this [media release](#) and the Perspectives Brief '[Digital maturity models for primary health care](#)' can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

Media enquiries: Kylie Woolcock, Chief Executive, AHHA

0410 625 830