



Tax concession helps improve patient safety



HealthCare Software's innovative technology is being implemented in 16 hospitals across Australia.

Cutting down on medication errors and improving patient safety are just two of the reasons behind the innovation developed by *HealthCare Software*.

The company's Chief Executive Officer, John Elkerton, who worked as a Clinical Pharmacist in hospitals for many years before founding the company, saw the amount of medication errors being made and couldn't believe that patients' records were still being written on paper and filed away.

He thought that there must be a better way, particularly with the advances in technology that have transformed other industries.

John and his team have spent the last five years developing software to provide an alternative approach to managing patient medication records and to help reduce the occurrence of medication misadventure.

The software, called the HCS Clinical Suite, is now being implemented in 16 hospitals across Australia.

John said that the software allowed clinicians in hospitals to share patients' medication records with the other health professionals involved in their care, both within hospital and community settings.

"It means that there's a record of the medicines that the patient has taken, the dosages, and whether there were adverse reactions to any medicines.

Because it is web-based, the record is available throughout the health service for reference whenever medication decisions need to be made.

"During a hospital stay, the software means that everyone handling your case can add their information to your record – from your physiotherapist to your anaesthetist."

This record of your medication – a whole-of-hospital electronic discharge statement – is then available when you leave the hospital.

The record can then be sent to your GP and you can keep your own copy.

“The concession has been a fantastic opportunity for us.”

“It means there’s a real handover of care. Australian Government figures show that this handover to GPs only happens in 40 per cent of cases,” John said.

Major heart surgery was a good example of the importance of a good handover.

“After heart surgery, you may no longer need half the medicines you were taking and it’s so important that your GP knows about these changes.

“GPs are left hanging on a limb when they don’t get this information,” John said.

“What we’re looking at is the failure of one part of the health system to adequately inform another to enable them to take responsibility for delivering quality care.”

As this record is also available to take home, it can help you, your carer or your community nurse better understand the medicines you need to take, how often and in what dosage.

“This is also a very important feature of the software. Australian Government figures show that most medication mistakes – 80 per cent – happen in the home,” John said.

“Some people take 10 medicines at a time, and have to remember when to take each medicine and how much of each. These problems are magnified when people are elderly or confused.

“We’ve worked very closely with our customers and the Australian Government to develop our system, and we’ve more than met the applicable national standards.”

The Hobart-based company has been registered for the Australian Government’s *R&D Tax Concession* since 2005. The concession is delivered by AusIndustry.

The concession means that companies can claim back 125 per cent of their research and



HealthCare Software’s HCS Clinical Suite helps manage patient medication.

development expenses when they lodge tax returns.

“The concession has been a fantastic opportunity for us,” John said.

“It has helped us transition from a start-up to an established company.

“There are very few examples of start-up companies in the medical field, and building software to this standard is a major undertaking.

“It takes years to develop software to a marketable standard, and any profits we’ve made have been put back into R&D.

“In five years time, we’d like to see ourselves as the leading supplier of medication management systems in Australia, and in some selected overseas countries.

“And most of all, we’d like to see our solutions really making a difference to the quality of care Australians are receiving from their hospitals.”

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R&D Tax Concession

The *R&D Tax Concession* allows companies to deduct 125 per cent of their research and development expenditure when lodging their tax returns.

The government has enhanced the concession by providing innovative small companies with an *R&D Tax Offset*.

Companies need to register their activities with AusIndustry each year to claim a concession.

About AusIndustry

AusIndustry is the Australian Government’s principal business program delivery division in the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

AusIndustry delivers more than 30 products, worth nearly \$2 billion, to more than 12,000 businesses and 85,000 individuals a year.

AusIndustry products include innovation grants, tax and duty concessions, small business development, industry support and venture capital.

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