




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health, integrated electronic Medical Record Program

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): Today I want to update the House on Queensland Health's integrated electronic Medical Record, or ieMR, program. Members would be aware of recent ransomware cyber attacks that impacted upon personal computers and computer networks operated by private enterprise and governments around the world. This attack did not result in any breaches to Queensland Health security. Queensland Health cybersecurity staff cooperated with their state government cybersecurity colleagues, with colleagues in other jurisdictions and with our vendors to fend off this serious ransomware attack that has impacted upon so many government agencies, private businesses and individuals worldwide.

Over the course of that weekend as part of protecting our systems from cyberattack, a series of security patches provided by software owners such as Microsoft, Cerner and Citrix were loaded to further protect Queensland Health systems from attack. As I have said often in this place, patient safety is a top priority for the Palaszczuk government. Protecting our networks and the integrity of our information systems is critically important in achieving that goal. Yesterday I received advice from the Chief Executive of eHealth Queensland, Dr Richard Ashby, that while those patches have protected the integrity of our systems and data it appears these protections may be making logging on and off the ieMR system difficult for some users. The impact is affecting five hospitals out of Queensland's 193 hospitals and health clinics—the Princess Alexandra and Lady Cilento Children's hospitals in Brisbane and the Mackay, Cairns and Townsville hospitals. While this is causing inconvenience to staff, I am advised that there have been no patient safety issues and our hospitals are operating as usual.

While a large number of users remain on the system, full downtime procedures—for which staff have been trained and are ready, including reverting to paper systems as necessary—are operating as required. These backup systems operate in accordance with clinical protocols which are practised regularly to prepare for any downtime event, including scheduled maintenance. Our clinicians and support staff are doing what they do best, and that is caring for patients. I am further advised that the impact of logon issues may result in some delays to patient admission or discharge and I thank our staff once again for their hard work and patience.

The response to this matter is being led by Dr Richard Ashby, Chief Executive of eHealth Queensland. Dr Ashby is known to many in the chamber as he led the successful implementation of ieMR at the Princess Alexandra Hospital as the Chief Executive of the Metro South Hospital and Health Service. ieMR has been operating at the PA effectively since late 2015, with improved clinical operations and no significant patient or systems issues. No clinician or health administrator in the nation knows ieMR better than Dr Ashby. While I am advised that this situation could remain current for at least seven days, Dr Ashby and the team at eHealth Queensland, along with senior hospital and health service staff, are working with the vendor, Cerner, to resolve this issue as soon as possible. I thank our staff for their continued dedication. They are the backbone of our world-class health system. I will keep the House informed of developments.