

'Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our ability to quickly embrace digital health technologies like telehealth has been a game changer in our response to this global health crisis,' says Australian Health Review Editor-in-Chief Dr Sonj Hall.

Released today, the latest edition of the [Australian Health review](#), the Australian Healthcare and Hospital Association's (AHHA) peer-reviewed journal, takes a deep dive on how the rapid uptake of digital health technologies shaped the pandemic response in Australia. It also examines how this has impacted, and continues to impact, the continuation of primary care and other vital health services.

'Telehealth and other digital health services have enabled our health system to look after patients in their own homes during lockdowns, while easing pressure on resources, workforce and reduced unnecessary spread in the community,' says Dr Hall.

'There has also been a shift in the workforce as many healthcare professionals who have been over stretched and increasingly suffering from burnout in the lead up to and during the pandemic, are eager to pivot to working in this new digital space.

'This has been echoed in a policy reflection by Prof Claire Jackson AM from the University of Queensland, saying that there is a need to adopt and mainframe the exciting telehealth and workforce innovation that has occurred over the past two years and expand it to 'whole of system and workforce re-design.'

Research in this issue covers real word case studies of digital health implementation and the lessons learnt, including themes of COVID testing in the home, hospital pandemic preparedness and how electronic health records can aid future research.

'The expansion in the use of digital health records in recent years has not only meant easier communication between teams of health care professionals, but also increased the potential impact of data research. In this issue, a case study from researchers at the University of Sydney, emphasises the importance of having strong frameworks and protocols in place for how innovations in digital health data can be used in future research.

'Further advancements of digital health technologies will continue to help us respond to COVID-19 in the community but also opens doors to create a more patient centred health care system. One that can provide flexible care that measures the outcomes that matter to patients at the same time as supporting and taking some pressure off our exhausted workforce. We just need to seize the opportunity.'

Articles from the June 2022 AHR can be found [here](#). An online version of this [media release](#) may be found on the [AHHA website](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit healthcare.

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