

Telecom giant Telstra to support Australia in building large cancer database

May 26, 2016 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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In a step forward to help Australian citizens be more vigilant about their health, the country's telecom giant Telstra will build and operate a national cancer screening register. Telstra's health division has been selected by the Commonwealth Department of Health to deliver and operate the Australian National Cancer Screening Register. The \$178.3-million contract is described as a groundbreaking initiative in the fight against cancer.

The contract entitles Telstra to link a number of government agencies, such as My Health Record and Medicare, and private health providers. Commenting on this initiative Cynthia Whelan, Group Executive of International and New Businesses at Telstra, said, "The register would deliver a single database with one record per patient. Australians will be able to access their records online, and with patient consent general practitioners and medical specialists will have access to patient data and records from any state or territory from their clinical desktops."

The register's team would work with stakeholders, including all Australians, health providers and federal, state and territory governments and registers. Whelan said that health providers are expected to help ensure the new system would work for them and their patients, while managers of current registers would provide experience and expertise in the partnership.

Expressing his commitment, Telstra's Health Managing Director Shane Solomon, said, "Previously Australia's bowel cancer screening registry was purely paper based, with no reminders or follow-ups sent. This is life saving screening."