

Data capture technology and data standards readiness critical for healthcare



The need for greater traceability & visibility across Australian healthcare supply chains has been a topic of discussion for well over a decade. Events over the past 18 months have only increased this focus as the sector has struggled to meet the additional challenges brought by COVID-19 and some underlying issues have been highlighted.

Whilst tracking of products has typically only been viewed as a 'supply chain' problem that existed behind the scenes, this same period has shown that we need to have greater focus on managing product digitally all the way through to the clinical process, the patient and the consumer.

Digital enablement of clinicians, patients and consumers means data standards

Organisations and peak bodies across Australian healthcare have been increasingly focussed on increasing sector wide digital capability and maturity. In line with this, data standards and 2D scanning capability is increasingly playing a pivotal role in enabling digital health for consumers and health providers into the future.

Investment in the right technology for the 2D barcode future

Though we have been relatively slow to adopt barcoding at point of care (BPOC) in many parts of healthcare in Australia, the quest for greater visibility and increased digitisation is rapidly changing what we need to consider our technology investment.

Emerging regulations are driving some of the need for changes, but so too is the maturity of understanding that we must know what products we have, where they are and who as the patient or consumer they are being provided to.

It is not only a question of improving the supply chain, but also important in supporting safety and the accuracy of data we now need in real time. Investment in camera-based scanning equipment and ensuring that solutions or applications can read data from the 2D barcodes and can parse the data string following global data standards should now be included in the digital strategies across healthcare.

Why are camera-based scanners needed?

Traditionally we have had linear barcodes or sadly no barcodes, however with the requirement of more data and more data elements to be available, the size of linear barcodes has tended to be too large or limited for many of today's applications.

Some investment had been made in devices that could scan linear codes, however unfortunately these cannot read 2d symbology. An upgrade to camera based or Charged Coupled Device (CCD) based scanner enables organisations to scan both.

Why do solutions need to be able to support global data standards?

In the past healthcare has largely used internally created codes or no scanning at all. The focus has now changed to the use of global data standards such as ISO, GS1 or ISBT as they ensure a consistent structure and interpretation of data — effectively supporting interoperability.

Recommendations

To support the evolving need for increased accuracy and safety across Australian healthcare it is recommended that healthcare organisations review their data standards and scanning capability.

For more information contact GS1 Australia for assistance email healthcareteam@gs1au.org



»
For more information visit
www.gs1au.org/healthcare