

Health Information Strategy- New Zealand Launched

The Health Information Strategy for New Zealand (HIS-NZ) 2005 was launched by Health Minister Annette King at the HINZ (Health Informatics New Zealand) Conference in August 2005.

The Strategy was developed in consultation with the health and disability sector.

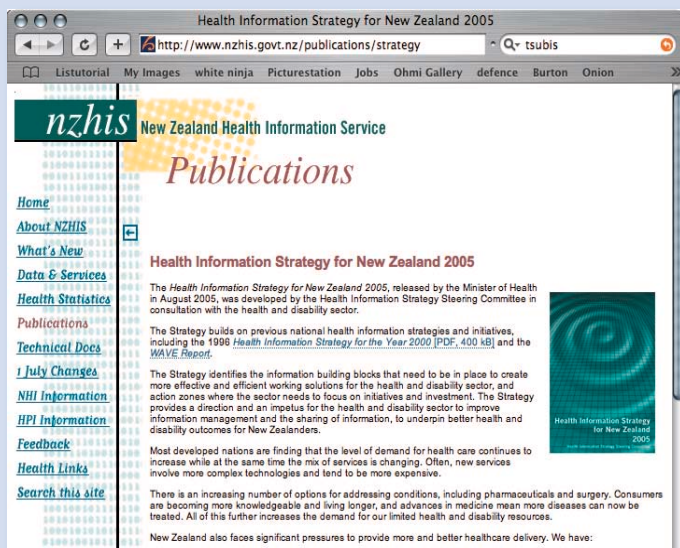
The Strategy provides direction and impetus for the health and disability sector to improve information management and sharing, to underpin better health and disability outcomes for New Zealanders. It builds on previous national health information strategies and initiatives, including the 1996 Health Information Strategy for the Year 2000 and the WAVE Report.

The Strategy defines the information building blocks needed to create more effective and efficient working solutions for the health and disability sector, and identifies 12 action zones where the sector needs to focus on initiatives and investment.

HISAC (Health Information Strategy Action Committee) has been created to oversee the initiatives outlined in the HIS-NZ.

HISO, which is now a subcommittee of HISAC, will remain focused on establishing standards for the health sector.

You can download the HIS-NZ strategy from www.nzhis.govt.nz/publications/strategy.html



HISO e-Publishes Standards

HISO is pleased to announce that we published two new groups of standards in June 2005: the New Zealand Pathology Observation Code Sets; and the Health Practitioner Index (HPI) – Code Set and Data Set. Contact us at the address below for a copy of either standard on CD or download them from our website www.hiso.govt.nz/publications.html

HISO acknowledges and thanks the Expert Committees who worked on these projects for their valued contributions.

Health Practitioner Index (HPI)- Code Set and Data Set

The HPI will be a central source of core information about all registered practitioners, organisations and facilities. It can also be extended to health workers if required. HPI Code and Data Sets provide identifiers required to uniquely describe the practitioner, delivery location and organisation for health transactions.

Individual patient health services can be delivered by a variety of practitioners. By using the HPI these practitioners will be able to share patient information (where appropriate) efficiently, effectively and securely.

New Zealand Pathology Observation Code Sets

This standard will be used in laboratory information and patient management systems to facilitate laboratory ordering, results reporting and exchanging data. This will enable the seamless management of information across different providers, where appropriate, to ensure the health and wellbeing of the individual.

This code set was customised for New Zealand from the LOINC (Logical Observation Identifiers Names and Codes) code set for reporting a variety of pathology tests.

To assist implementation, the Expert Committee has developed a business process document as well as the code set. This is available in both .xls and .xml formats on our website.

HINZ Conference and Exhibition

The largest Health IT Exhibition in New Zealand was held in Auckland in August 2005 at the HINZ Conference. The theme of the conference was the sharing of innovation ideas and experiences under the title "Telling the New Zealand Story".

New Zealand is one of the earliest adopters of Health Level Seven (HL7) messaging standards for electronic laboratory results reporting and Conference delegates had the opportunity to attend two workshops on HL7 facilitated by Klaus Veil.

HISO's stand at the Exhibition highlighted our work, our successes so far and the standards we are currently developing. Programme Manager Kari Lloyd manned the stand daily and reported a steady stream of interested professionals from across the health sector.

Kari hopes that as a result of the Conference and Exhibition the development of standards within the Health Sector will receive even more support from the sector and that the standards already developed will be put widely into use.

"HISO's aim is to develop new standards to bring parity across the sector and, as a result, improve patient care", Kari says.

Referrals, Status Reports and Discharges

A workable national standard for referrals and discharges remains a key priority across the sector, reflected by the high response level for nominations to sit on the Expert Committee.

The Expert Committee has now been appointed, selected on the basis of having sufficient collective knowledge across the sector from both the technical (IT experts) and practical (GPs and Age Concern) sides. We have also retained a number of the nominations to serve on a reference group to assist the Committee in making decisions.

The Committee has met three times and smaller sub-committees have done considerable work looking at scenarios for business process and messaging standards. The findings of the sub-committees are discussed in depth at the full committee meetings to ensure that all aspects are considered.

We are confident that the Committee will, despite the complexities of the subject, produce a public comment draft for referrals and discharges by December 2005.

Projects on the Horizon

Pathology and Radiology Messaging:

The Health Level Seven (HL7) v2.1 standards implemented in 1994 are now inadequate for accommodating a number of key data elements and concepts, and any move to electronic test ordering will not be feasible using this standard.

The Pathology and Radiology Messaging project will develop and document HL7 business processes and implementation guides for orders and results messaging based on a minimum of the upgraded HL7 v2.4.

The HISO Pathology and Radiology Messaging Committee has been approved and the first meeting will take place on 28 October 2005 in Auckland.

The completed project is due for approval and publication in late 2006.

Health Geographic Information:

There is currently no standard to define 'location' data within the health sector. In 2004, a six-month study explored the current sector geocoding activities and issues and recommended the creation of various standards.

The first of these standards will deal with Spatial Referencing with Coordinates (Geocoding), and will provide the definition of the coordinate system used by the sector to collect and maintain 'location' data. Geocoding is the process that assigns a coordinate to address data, currently recorded by area features, such as domicile codes.

HISO is now asking for feedback on the draft standard and will distribute copies widely across the health sector. Submissions are due by 22 November 2005.

Have any questions? Please contact:

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And don't forget to visit our website at www.hiso.govt.nz for the latest updates on all our projects and for copies of previous newsletters and standards published.