

Health Information Strategy Pushes Ahead

Improving co-ordination and sharing of information in the rapidly changing health and disability sector is a key goal of the new Health Information Strategy.

The newly established Health Information Strategy Action Committee met for the first time this week to plan the implementation of the strategy launched by Minister of Health Annette King earlier this month.

Committee chair Paul Cressey says that it is clear that good quality health information is required to support cost effective health and disability services and that's where the strategy will make a difference.

"Ultimately to assist health professionals provide effective health services to clients and make informed decisions about targeting health services, we need quality information. Our job is to provide the leadership and advice to ensure this happens."

The strategy identifies twelve priority areas, called action zones. Five of these are about information systems that underpin the health sector, for example developing a data quality strategy for the National Health Index (NHI). The other action zones focus on specific areas such as chronic conditions, outpatients and primary care.

The strategy has three broad objectives, to increase participation through networking and sharing of health information across the sector, supporting collaboration across providers in the care of consumers, and improving targeting through improved decision-making.

Mr Cressey says the task of the Health Information Strategy Action Committee is made easier through all the initial members of the committee coming from the Health Information Standards Organisation (HISO).

"We've got the experience of setting standards for the sector and we all work well together as a group. Collectively we want to both build and maintain momentum to put our programme of work outlined in the strategy into place as quickly as possible."

To do this the group will meet monthly, with an early priority to establish good communication from and with the sector to keep interest and enthusiasm in the strategy alive.

The group has already formed a standards sub-committee, which will retain the HISO name. Mr Cressey says that over the next two months the group will

be initiating projects to improve information infrastructure and work on the national health information collections.

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Background Information

Paul Cressey (Chair)

Chai Chuah, Chief Executive of Hutt Valley Health

Helmut Modlik, Maori/independent

Julian Inch, DHBNZ

Ken Leech, Independent Practitioners Association

Sandy Grey, midwife

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