



## **A Commitment to Community Engagement and Involvement in Health Information Sharing**

### **Media Release**

**25 September 2008**

Following on from the successful inaugural Health Information Consumer Forum held in February, the Health Information Strategy Action Committee (HISAC) recently convened the second forum on 4<sup>th</sup> September. Over 30 health consumer representatives and advocates from across New Zealand attended the all day event in Wellington.

At the forum in February it was acknowledged by HISAC that engagement with the community about use of and access to personal health information had not been strong.

As part of an ongoing commitment to improving community engagement HISAC held a series of regional meetings in August in an attempt to reach a wider audience. These were held in Dunedin, Palmerston North, and Auckland.

Barbara Robson, consumer representative from Fielding, facilitated the Palmerston North meeting. "While a number of attendees acknowledged they knew little about current health information sharing practices, they were pleased to have had the opportunity to learn more about what was happening now and what was being proposed for the future" Mrs Robson said.

"They provided good advice and comments to be fed back to HISAC and the national consumer forum, and they expressed an interest in attending any follow up meetings HISAC might organise in the future."

At the national forum the Privacy Commissioner, Marie Shroff, spoke of the need to remember that this is about people's personal information and is not about a management system.

"We need clarity about the way forward and the ongoing involvement of the consumer is crucial to achieving this clarity. There are phases to be gone through to understand the consumer view and experience but this will take more than a day", Ms Shroff said.

One of the outcomes of the day was a commitment by the HISAC office to further develop the draft consumer engagement guidelines with a group of attendees that volunteered.

Again the key theme to emerge from the national forum was the need to continue to build the confidence and trust of the community.

**ENDS**

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## **Background**

### What is HISAC and what is its role?

The Health Information Strategic Action Committee was established by the Minister of Health in August 2005 to provide governance of, oversight of, and leadership for the implementation of the Health Information Strategy for New Zealand 2005.

### The Health Information Strategy for New Zealand

The Health Information Strategy for New Zealand (HIS-NZ) presents a sector-wide business strategy for the health and disability sector to develop and supply innovative health information systems. The success of HIS-NZ relies on the co-operation and collaboration of the entire health sector and has three broad objectives:

- to increase participation through networking and sharing of health information across the sector
- to support collaboration across providers in the care of consumers
- to improve targeting through improved decision-making.

### Information sharing in the New Zealand health sector

The Health Information Strategy for New Zealand (HIS-NZ) expressly discounts the creation of a single national repository of personally identifiable health information or a single national Electronic Health Record.

However, the strategy does signal increased information sharing amongst health providers involved in episodes of care. The strategy is also concerned with information that is used for population health, the funding, and planning of health services, and research purposes.