Sharing Excellence in Health and Disability Information Management 2006
Foreword

New Zealand continues to demonstrate leadership and excellence in the management of health and disability information. Our country’s reputation for innovation applies just as much in the health informatics sector as anywhere else. This is evident in a number of projects that are contributing in positive ways to improving the health of New Zealanders. It is exciting and encouraging to be given an opportunity each year to showcase some of our successful ventures.

I am pleased to present the winning projects for the 2006 Sharing Excellence in Health and Disability Information Management Awards. Through their stories, the winners prove that being proactive about an idea and also having ‘patient-focused’ models are pivotal to success. By showcasing the achievements of these award-winning projects we can see the great level and depth to which patient or health service needs were identified and subsequently met. Free 24-hour community access to health information or advice, improved quality of data and better monitoring systems are just some of the positive features of the winning projects in which taxpayers, patients, and those at the coalface of health and disability services reap benefits.

This year, the awards have been conferred to a range of providers from non-governmental organisations to primary health care providers reflecting progress across many parts of the sector.

The secret to success is making success less of a secret. We can further achieve our own goals and those of others by sharing ‘what works’. I hope you will use this book to extract valuable information for use in your work and that you, too, will be encouraged to share your own stories of success.

Congratulations and thank you to this year’s winners.

The Ministry of Health and Health Informatics New Zealand are pleased to support the people behind the projects and all those associated with their work.

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Introduction

The 2006 *Sharing Excellence in Health and Disability Information Management Awards* are a Ministry of Health and Health Informatics New Zealand joint initiative. The awards recognise the best in New Zealand’s information management projects and the organisations and people that drive them.

The awards celebrate success and excellence in health and information management and encourage continual improvements in this area of the sector. They recognise those who have developed sustainable innovations and showcase projects that help to improve health and participation by people and communities. Projects that are transferable to other organisations or can apply to other health and disability areas are included, and all of them promote a sharing and learning environment.

This booklet summarises the winners and their projects. The summaries inform health professionals, academics, policy makers and managers about the innovative use of information and technology, and how they can make changes in their work that lead to positive differences in their communities.

All of the winners align with Ministry of Health strategies and policies, including the New Zealand Health Strategy, the Health Information Strategy of New Zealand, Primary Health Care Strategy, the Māori Health Strategy – He Korowai Oranga, and policies relating to information, privacy and security. They demonstrate that the sector and the Ministry of Health are in agreement on how best to manage information and technology for improving health outcomes. There was a strong acknowledgment among the finalists that their projects are driven from the people and communities who face the challenges directly, and that the support of the Ministry has helped many of these projects to become reality.

Applications for this year’s awards show the diversity in our health sector and included projects from community providers to hospitals, to the inner workings of District Health Boards.

An advisory group of representatives from Health Informatics New Zealand and the Ministry of Health reviewed applications. The following criteria were used to select the winners:

- the benefit of the project to the health sector
- whether the innovation is transferable
- the degree of innovation
- the Information Technology and Information Management components of the project
- the cost/benefit analyses.

The four winners offer useful insights to planners, policy analysts, health professionals, communities and the Ministry. They reveal the approaches used and lessons learned and describe effective methods, positive impacts, and experiences in information and technology management.

This booklet proudly presents the four winning projects.
The Linkage Trust created Webhealth, an internet-based community tool that helps people connect to health and social service providers in their local area. Webhealth is accessed by providers and the public either via a website using the Internet, or via kiosks that are placed in high-traffic locations around the community, such as shopping centres or hospitals. The design can be replicated for local communities. Regions can create their own content at their own pace using a consistent ‘look and feel’ approach supported by a strong IT team and a consultative information management style. Webhealth’s statistics show use is escalating. Its popularity is evident as District Health Boards line up for their region’s sites to be developed.

McKesson (NZ) Limited and the Order of St John collaborated to develop Healthline, a free 24-hour telephone advice service. Registered nurses staff two call centres and use their expertise and the support of a sophisticated computer system to advise callers on all types of health symptoms. The data on how the service is being used indicates that it is reaching communities that do not have good access to conventional health services due to remoteness, age or ethnicity, and that use of the service is growing.

The New Zealand Blood Service developed the Demand Management Project to improve efficiencies in the use and cost of blood products, and to make better decisions about the use of blood transfusions. The project extracts data from multiple information systems, including blood management systems in hospitals and national collections. The data is placed into a central point that shows the collection, testing, processing and supply of blood and blood products. It provides data on transfusion practices to hospital clinicians and helps to identify trends. For audit purposes, the project also shows patterns of transfusions that can be compared with clinical international practices and standards.

The Wellington Independent Practitioners Association’s project is the Integrated Query Engine (IQE) – a shared service for the lower half of the North Island that solves difficulties in collecting and analysing data. Limited time and hard-to-find IT skills amongst its members meant an inconsistent and long process for collecting data in the region. The potential value of the data was not being realised. IQE now enables Primary Health Organisations to remotely extract data from their practice databases. It combines and analyses the data in an infinite number of ways, giving managers more depth of information about patients, providers and diseases than ever before – and that, they say, is just the beginning.