



NEW ZEALAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BETTER INFORMATION
FOR BETTER CARE:
NEW ZEALAND'S APPROACH
TO EFFICIENT AND
AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

EXCERPT FROM THE WHITE PAPER BY MALCOLM POLLOCK, DIRECTOR OF
NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH INNOVATION, APRIL 2012



New Zealand's use of IT in healthcare is among the highest in the world.

Information technology (IT) that supports the sharing of clinical medical information is proving to be a valuable means of ensuring continuity where it matters most: human healthcare.

According to the OECD, evidence is growing that, if left unchanged, Europe's current healthcare systems will become unsustainable within the next 15 years.¹

As budgetary pressures take hold, finding efficiencies has become central to the preservation of high quality care. This combined with ageing populations suffering from chronic conditions, and lower proportions of individuals providing the tax revenue on which healthcare funding depends, is creating the perfect storm.

Every European nation has a vested interest in protecting and improving the health of its citizens, and many are seeking and finding ways to leverage IT for this purpose despite the complexity and scale of the various healthcare systems.

New Zealand, a relatively small and young country, is well placed to offer a new perspective to Europe, not least drawn from its innovative technological approaches to healthcare challenges, while containing costs.

In a 2010 international survey, the Commonwealth Fund ranked New Zealand first in overall quality care delivery, including first in coordinated care and patient centred care delivery.²

1 N Denjoy, 2010, Health and IT showing the way forward, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, The OECD Observer, Paris Oct 2010 (281): 20

2 Mirror, Mirror on the wall: how the performance of the U.S. healthcare system compares internationally, 2010 update, The Commonwealth Fund, retrieved from: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Fund-Reports/2010/Jun/Mirror-Mirror-Update.aspx?page=all>

New Zealand was among the first countries in the world to establish an electronic Population Health index, a secure system that features nearly 20 years of health encounters.

This focus on innovation has resulted in New Zealand's health sector being recognised internationally as a provider of high quality and cost effective services, as can be gauged by these independent rankings:

- New Zealand is ranked first in overall quality care delivery, including first in coordinated care and patient centred care delivery.³
- First in practices routinely sending patients reminders for preventive or follow-up care (97 percent – same as the UK).
- Highest ratio of using a computerised system for patient reminders for follow-up care (92 percent) rather than manual procedures (76 percent in the UK⁴).
- First in practices with advanced electronic health information capacity (92 percent), followed by the UK (89 percent⁵).
- New Zealand, together with Norway, displays the highest physician satisfaction rate (over 75 percent) with practicing medicine.⁶
- Second in doctors' use of electronic patient medical records (97 percent), following the Netherlands (99 percent⁷).

At the same time, the per capita cost of healthcare in New Zealand is less than in many other developed countries. According to the OECD, in 2009 New Zealand per capita health expenditure was US\$2,983 versus US\$4,348 in Denmark, US\$4,218 in Germany, US\$3,978 in France, US\$3,487 in the United Kingdom and US\$7,960 in the United States.⁸

3 See Footnote 2

4 2009 International health policy survey of primary care physicians in eleven countries, the Commonwealth Fund, retrieved from: http://www.commonwealthfund.org/-/media/Files/Publications/In%20the%20Literature/2009/Nov/PDF_Schoen_2009_Commonwealth_Fund_11country_intl_survey_chartpack_white_bkgd_PF.pdf

5 Electronic medical record adoption in New Zealand primary care physician offices, August 2010, The Commonwealth Fund, retrieved from: http://www.commonwealthfund.org/-/media/Files/Publications/Issue%20Brief/2010/Aug/1434_Protti_electronic_med_record_adoption_New_Zealand_intl_brief.pdf

6 See Footnote 2

7 See Footnote 2

8 OECD Health Data 2010, Country notes and press release – Canada, retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/33/38979719.pdf>



Throughout the country, innovative technology is enabling clinical excellence. New Zealand's use of IT in healthcare is among the highest in the world.

99% of the country's pharmacies are computerised⁹ and there is a rapid uptake across the sector of electronic medical records.¹⁰

Together,
innovators,
entrepreneurs
and clinicians
on the frontline
have spurred
rapid growth in
New Zealand's
health technology
sector.

9 New Zealand health technology excellence - Delivered to the world, 2010, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, retrieved from: http://www.ehealthnews.eu/images/stories/pdf/nz_health_technology_brochure.pdf

10 See Footnote 2

New Zealand's record in primary healthcare is a notable area of strength, particularly in the effective coordination of care, taking a patient-centred focus and the use of innovative IT as an enabler that drives success.¹²

As noted by the Commonwealth Fund¹¹, New Zealand's record in primary healthcare is a notable area of strength, particularly in the effective coordination of care, taking a patient-centred focus and the use of innovative IT as an enabler that drives success.

New Zealand has achieved these advances through far-sighted strategies, the leadership provided by the National Health IT Board, by the long term investment over more than 20 years in health IT and the country's single tier of governance.

Healthcare is viewed as operating along a continuum: from patient, to primary medicine, to community and ancillary care, to the secondary and tertiary sectors; from public to private; from strategy to operation.

New Zealand was among the first countries in the world to establish an electronic Population Health Index, a secure system that features nearly 20 years of health encounters. It is now supplemented by an equally comprehensive Health Practitioner Index. Beyond informing public policy decisions, these indices have enabled development of rich datasets, which in turn have sparked the growth of an internationally respected health research capability.

At a policy level, New Zealand is committed to protecting and improving its health system on a sustainable basis. It is accepted that new approaches are required to increase quality while containing spending.

New Zealand is focusing on clinically-led innovative models of care; greater involvement of patients and consumers in designing future health services; and greater integration of investment in IT, workforce and infrastructure.

11 2009 International health policy survey of primary care physicians in eleven countries, the Commonwealth Fund, retrieved from: http://www.commonwealthfund.org/-/media/Files/Publications/In%20the%20Literature/2009/Nov/PDF_Schoen_2009_Commonwealth_Fund_11country_intl_survey_chartpack_white_bkgd_PF.pdf

12 See Footnote 11



New Zealand's innovative character has been roused by pressing challenges in healthcare.

New Zealand is inviting European health policy makers, clinical leaders, and executives from the healthcare and IT sectors to consider opportunities for collaboration, exchange and mutual learning.

There is a broad consensus across Europe that a focus on prevention is the key to achieving a healthy ageing population. New Zealand is in the vanguard of this and many other developments in healthcare delivery, including:

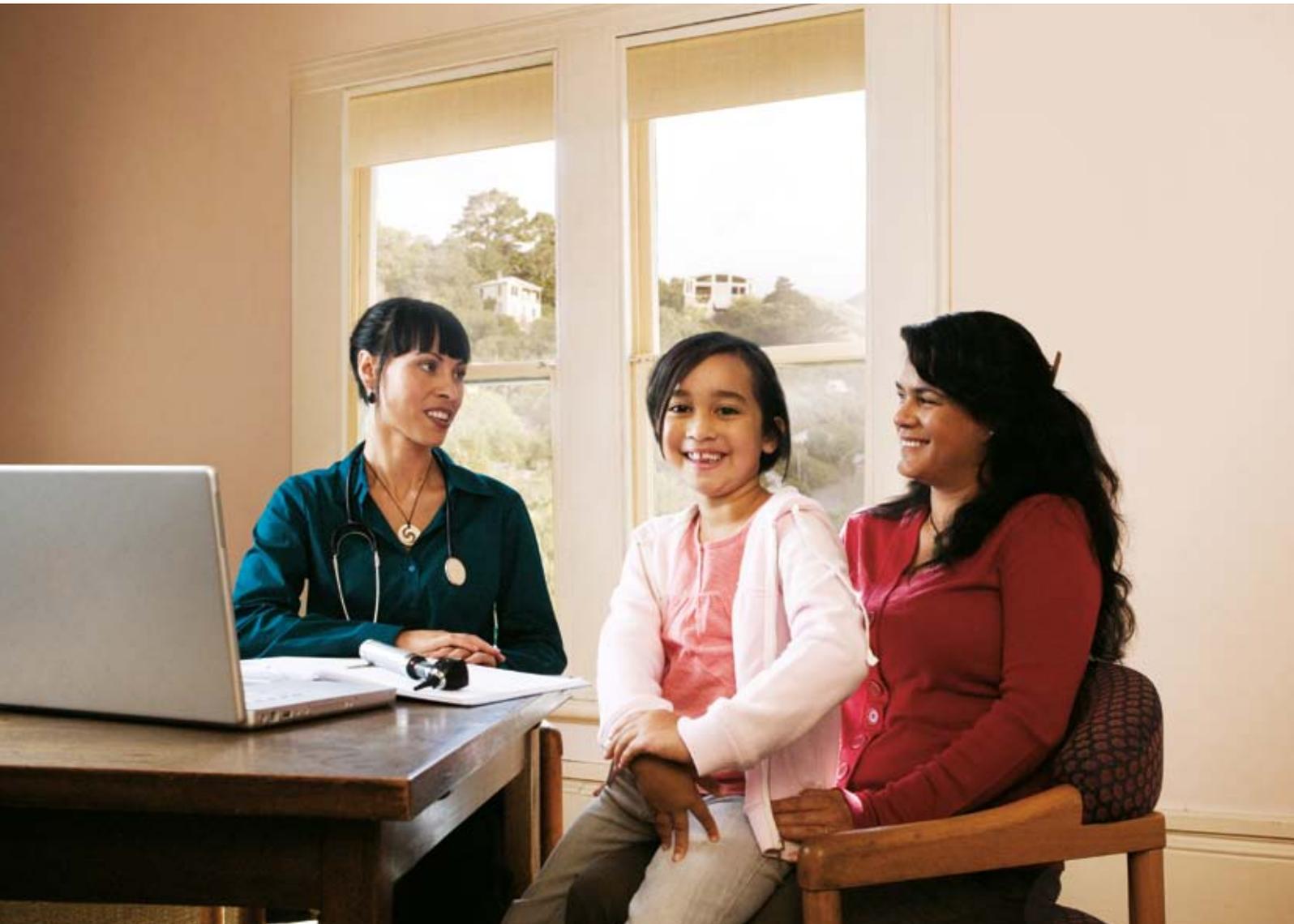
- the prevalent use of clinical IT systems in primary care
- integrated care across primary, secondary and community settings
- shared care planning across the continuum of care
- patient centric health, patient self-management and patient-doctor collaboration
- the use of national indices
- hospital resource utilisation management

New Zealand's innovative character has been roused by pressing challenges in healthcare. Clinicians, policy makers, researchers and technicians have risen to the challenge with the active support and participation of New Zealand's homegrown, yet internationally recognised, health technology companies.

The collaborations have changed clinical practice and other aspects of the health system for the better, particularly over the last decade.

Together, innovators, entrepreneurs and clinicians on the frontline have spurred rapid growth in New Zealand's health technology sector.

Granted, being a small country of 4.5 million people with a single tier of government simplifies streamlining, but New Zealand has confronted many territorial and proprietary barriers that stand as obstacles to developing a truly integrated care service.



The approach has required health system stakeholders to:

- involve clinical leadership in strategy development
- develop vision and a strategy for socialising it throughout the sector
- gain community buy-in and support, as far as possible
- put in place key infrastructural elements: technologies, consent frameworks, architectures, integration approaches, process changes etc.
- create partner-style engagements between the healthcare sector and the supplier and research communities
- initiate a series of trials and evaluate them, with the clear commitment to move from trial to large-scale deployments
- align the reward frameworks with the new structures and processes (still a work in progress).

Success has been fuelled by the innovative nature of local culture, and by technologies and products this culture has developed.

There is much to learn from the approaches taken by different funders and providers in New Zealand and their significant use of IT to enable change.

This White Paper provides evidence that New Zealand's attainment of objectively measurable clinical excellence in its healthcare system arises from new, IT-enabled approaches to the delivery of healthcare. In many cases, success has been fuelled by the innovative nature of local culture, and by technologies and products this culture has developed.

Case studies illustrate how IT contributes to the quality of New Zealand's clinical care now recognised as among the best in the world. The White Paper also summarises, for comparative purposes, the IT strategies and progress in a number of European countries.

New Zealand is inviting European health policy makers, clinical leaders, and executives from the healthcare and IT sectors to consider opportunities for collaboration, exchange and mutual learning.

By sharing some of its experiences and innovations, New Zealand can offer a new perspective and highlight alternative pathways to success.



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This is the executive summary of the White Paper “Better Information for Better Care: New Zealand’s Approach to Efficient and Affordable Healthcare” written by Malcolm Pollock, Director of New Zealand’s National Institute for Health Innovation.

The White Paper highlights the crucial role that information technology (IT) plays in achieving a sustainable high quality health system. Malcolm Pollock details New Zealand’s journey and progress in the use of IT in healthcare, through various case studies and European comparisons.

For more information about New Zealand’s health technology sector or to request a copy of the White Paper please contact:

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