

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear DHB CEOs, PHO CEOs, NGO CEOs, Tertiary Institution CEOs/VCS

**Re: Development of a registry for evaluation and research of telehealth services in New Zealand**

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Tēnā koe,

During the COVID-19 lockdown in April 2020, many healthcare providers in New Zealand pivoted to telehealth to maintain continuity of care. This was highly valuable for many patients during the lockdown, however, there remains uncertainty over the path forward for telehealth in New Zealand. The approach we take now has the potential to augment or diminish equity of access to healthcare through telehealth innovation. For these reasons, many providers are seeking to evaluate and undertake further research into the safety and efficacy of telehealth in New Zealand.

The National Telehealth Forum (NZTHF), a Ministry of Health Expert Group<sup>1</sup>, has created a Research, Audit and Evaluation (RAE) Working Group, which is seeking to support individual efforts in the design and conduct of evaluation and research. To kick this off, we're seeking your support to create a registry of evaluations and research, both underway and complete. Currently, it is known that many evaluations are never shared outside an organisation and this may limit their value and the opportunity for system-wide learning. We ask that you support this work with the following steps:

1. Identify individuals within your organisation who are leading or have undertaken research or evaluations of telehealth and encourage them to connect with the:
  - a. Chair of RAE Working Group, A/Professor Inga Hunter: [i.hunter@massey.ac.nz](mailto:i.hunter@massey.ac.nz) and/or,
  - b. NZ Telehealth Programme Manager, Dr Charis Frethey: [charis@telehealth.org.nz](mailto:charis@telehealth.org.nz)
2. Outline how to and encourage individuals within your organisation to obtain approval to share the details of their research utilising the attached templates.
3. Register work directly by emailing: [research@telehealth.org.nz](mailto:research@telehealth.org.nz)

In addition, we are keen to identify telehealth policies and procedures, plus resources developed for patients, whanau, staff, so that we can reduce the duplication of siloed work. We will provide access to all registered work via the Telehealth Resource Centre: [www.telehealth.org.nz](http://www.telehealth.org.nz) -NZ's online resource for telehealth.

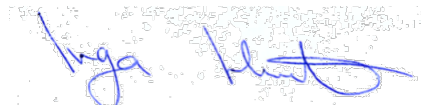
We thank you for your ongoing support and endeavour to provide further value with the development of this registry and associated work. We look forward to being able to present these in a format that will be of value to organisations across NZ.

We look forward to working with you to further our shared vision of an equitable, sustainable health service in 2021 and beyond. Please contact us directly with any queries, comments, or specific telehealth needs.

Nga mihi nui,



Dr Ruth Large  
Chair of the New Zealand Telehealth Leadership Group



A/Prof Inga Hunter  
Chair of the NZTHF RAE Working Group

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/leadership-ministry/expert-groups/new-zealand-telehealth-forum>