

## New Zealand Ministry Of Health



### Significant support for national e-health strategies

The New Zealand Government, through the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards, funds the delivery of health care with the goal of improving health and participation outcomes for New Zealanders.

Health services are undergoing change in order to improve the overall health of the population. The formation of District Health Boards and Primary Health Organisations are key steps in moving towards a population-based healthcare delivery system.

The Ministry of Health – the Government’s principal adviser on health and disability policy, supports the Boards and other sector organisations. The Ministry develops policy advice on health and disability issues, administers health law and regulations, funds health and disability support services, plans and maintains nationwide frameworks and service specifications, and monitors sector performance.

The Ministry also provides information services to the health and disability sector and to the public. To fulfil its goals to be knowledge based, people centred and system minded, the Ministry is developing productive, collaborative working relationships throughout the health and disability sector.

A collaborative working relationship between the Ministry and HealthLink has been established, according to Mr Mike Rillstone, the Ministry’s Group Manager of the New Zealand Health Information Service (NZHIS).

Describing the relationship with HealthLink as productive, Mike says, “HealthLink enhances the connectivity in the health sector, and that secure interconnectivity for all parties is essential for the development of e-health initiatives.”

“The Ministry’s relationship with HealthLink has grown as they have extended their credentials as a longstanding vendor of electronic communications services”.

“We are heading more and more into electronic transmission in order to support the development of our e-health strategies, clinical decisions and national data collections, and to support funding decisions and administration.”

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New Zealand Ministry of Health Group Manager,  
Mr Mike Rillstone

#### The Government’s e-health initiatives are three pronged:

- How e-health can support and enhance the health of individual patients and health consumers.
- How it can support clinicians.
- How it can improve the quality and timeliness of administering the health sector, capture statistical information, pay subsidy claims and manage contracts with health providers.

Mike describes the volume of the sector’s business handled electronically as significant. “Currently the majority of claims are received and paid electronically via HealthLink’s service, as are most of the sector’s laboratory requests and results.”

“Making claims and payments electronically is a fast way to transmit data with a high degree of quality and accuracy,” Mike says. “It is more timely, more accurate and more secure and it eliminates any need to re-enter data.”

“With the help of HealthLink, we have refined and improved the security of the claims systems so we can have improved confidence in confidentiality and privacy. Moreover claims are easier to track electronically...we know who’s sent them and when they are sent.”

“HealthLink is a New Zealand pioneer in the area of primary care health data transmission and their longstanding role puts them in a good position to understand the current and future requirements of the New Zealand health sector from a health network point of view.”

HealthLink is the Ministry-appointed Certification Authority in the health sector with the responsibility to generate and distribute digital certificates, based on instructions from the Registration Authority, to health care providers who deal electronically with health data.

HealthLink is one of two New Zealand companies officially accredited to provide health intranet services. Paramount in this appointment is the capability to provide secure networking services to the sector.

Describing the accreditation as “significant”, Mike says HealthLink’s compliance followed a thorough critique, which demonstrated that it was able to provide a high level of security and service delivery.

Mike concludes, “HealthLink is a New Zealand pioneer in the area of primary care health data transmission and their longstanding role puts them in a good position to understand the current and future requirements of the New Zealand health sector from a health network point of view.”