

Clinicians rose to the Challenge and now it's time for the health IT vendor community to respond

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The call to clinicians for them to describe issues they face in their day-to-day clinical practice generated an outstanding response. Of the nineteen submissions received from clinicians, a winning problem scenario has been selected as the challenge to be set the health IT vendor community.

This two part challenge – the Clinicians' Challenge – marries together the needs of clinicians with the very best innovation in health informatics. The initiative is being supported by Health Informatics New Zealand (HINZ), the New Zealand Health IT Cluster (the Cluster) and the National Health IT Board (Health IT Board).

The Clinicians' Challenge has brought together key stakeholder representatives. The judging panel for the Challenge includes representatives from HINZ, the National Information Clinical Leadership Group (an advisory group to the Health IT Board), the Cluster and a consumer representative.

'It's sometimes too easy for individuals to think they understand the issues. Having the problem posed by a health professional, and having consumer, as well as clinical and ICT industry, representation on the judging panel are important if the full benefits of the solution are to be realised,' said Professor Jim Warren, Chair of HINZ.

The winning problem case came from a colorectal cancer care nursing service that 'wants to ensure a seamless and timely interface between hospital and community-based continued care and social support systems'.

The Clinical Challenge has already been valuable in improving clinician engagement in health ICT, and it's only just the beginning. The judging panel identified some planned or existing health ICT initiatives, including some in the National Health IT Plan, that could assist or solve some of the problems raised by clinicians.

'We will continue the engagement we have started with clinicians to ensure there is broad awareness of the full range ICT solutions and services available to them, and that they are fully engaged in development of new solutions,' said Dougal McKechnie, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Health IT Cluster.

The challenge to vendors is being released today with a deadline of 22 October. Shortlisted vendors will be invited to present to the judging panel at the HINZ Annual Conference and Exhibition in Wellington, 2-4 November.

The winning vendor stands to receive up to \$20,000 worth of funding and support from the Health IT Board and the Cluster towards further developing the solution, for the benefit of clinicians, and patients.

More information about the Clinical Challenge and the HINZ Annual Conference and Exhibition is available at www.hinz.org.nz.

The National Health IT Plan is available at www.ithealthboard.health.nz.