# Clinical Informatics Position Statement

*Me mahi tahi tātou mo te oranga o te katoa*

We are all working together, for the wellbeing of all.

# CiLN Position Statement

The Clinical Informatics Leadership Network (CiLN) and Health Informatics New Zealand (HiNZ) have partnered to publish this Position Statement to assert the role of clinical informaticians. Aligned with responsibilities within the wider health sector, we recognise the role in supporting and partnering with data sovereignty and governance processes, in keeping with our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi—The Treaty of Waitangi.

Clinical informaticians work across the New Zealand health and disability eco-system, representing the needs of the population we serve: patients/consumers/clients and their family and whanau, the interdisciplinary care team, business and management professionals, and our information technology colleagues.

Clinical informaticians enable the evolution of health care through the application of their body of knowledge, clinical experience, understanding of health outcomes, and application of evidence based practice. Their understanding of the health system[1-5]

- informs information and technology development life cycles
- enhances clinical workflows and processes
- promotes interoperability to support data and information requirements
- contributes to clinical safety and patient care
- contextualises clinical informatics in their organisations and professional bodies
- promotes the use of clinical statistics and data science for decision making
- supports new models of care and ways of working, population health measures, equity of health care, and improved outcomes
- augments evaluation of emerging technologies and implementations

Our position is that clinical informaticians are integral to the digitisation of the health sector by leading and/or participating in the governance, procurement, design, development, change management, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and continuous improvement of health and care information systems and technologies. Clinical informaticians include registered, self-regulated and non-registered health professionals.

THE HEALTH AND DISABILITY SYSTEMS REVIEW INTERIM REPORT OF 2019[6] RECOGNISED THAT **A WORKFORCE WITH DIGITAL SKILLS/CAPABILITY IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE IN NEW ZEALAND**

## THIS POSITION STATEMENT CALLS FOR

### 1

Investment in clinical informatics roles at all levels of the health and disability sector. This includes senior leadership roles that provide transdisciplinary representation, supported by clinical informatics teams. These roles must have appropriate resourcing, experience, training and authority.

### 2

A clinical informatics career framework that recognises and encourages professional achievement and advancement, and supports research.

### 3

Recognition that clinical informaticians are fundamental to the success of data and digital initiatives. This includes participation in leadership, engagement, partnership, and governance; and incorporates representation and collaboration by consumers and clinicians in procurement, design, implementations, business as usual, and evaluations.

### 4

Clinical scopes of practice that include the use of data and information, technology, and clinical information systems.

### 5

A digitally literate and capable health and disability workforce. Tertiary and health sector education programmes must include informatics in their curricula, augmented with workplace training and ongoing continuous professional development activity.

"INVESTMENT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES HAS BEEN LOW, AND **CORE FOUNDATION WORK WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE HEALTH AND DISABILITY SYSTEM CAN GENERATE THE POTENTIAL GAINS** FROM OPERATING A MORE DIGITALLY ENABLED SYSTEM."

## CURRENT STATE

In New Zealand, there is a wide range of people and professions who analyse, design, implement and evaluate information and communication systems within the health sector.

Clinical informaticians come from a variety of health disciplines and work in both public and private organisations. They play an active role in informatics, and may be employed on specific or several projects. Some are emerging as leaders or specialists in this field, combining clinical practice with informatics. Others are recognised industry experts with health informatics qualifications and/or significant experience, who are senior leaders in their organisations and across the sector.

Clinical informaticians are often key to unlocking value because they sit across the divide between the clinical, data and digital domains. They act as an interpreter, while also adding their particular expertise.

The Health and Disability Review Panel interim report, released in August 2019[6] identified several challenges facing New Zealand's digital health sector.

Clinicians are highly embedded in their digital environment. Consequently they experience the negative effects of the high level of technical debt that has occurred in the New Zealand health system over many years. This chronic underinvestment is leading to increasing inefficiencies for the clinical workforce. Outdated hardware and software in our health services reflects this underinvestment, and so do issues related to interoperability, and difficulty in scaling innovations.

Many tools are now available to support clinicians in care delivery and operational health service management. Patients are active partners in their health care and are seeking to increase self-care through self-generated data, mobile applications and home monitoring.

The process for accrediting the quality of information systems and tools for implementation in healthcare organisations, alongside acceptable implementation processes, requires skilled clinical informatician input.

"**NEW ZEALAND IS LAGGING BEHIND OTHER COUNTRIES WITH LIMITED INTEROPERABILITY OF SYSTEMS AND LACK OF NATIONAL DATA STANDARDS.** MUCH OF THE DATA THE SYSTEM GENERATED IS TREATED AS A BY-PRODUCT OF CLINICAL PROCESSES AND IS NOT USED TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL."

"THE VENDOR LANDSCAPE IS FRAGMENTED, WITH **TOO MANY CUSTOMISED LEGACY SYSTEMS** THAT DO NOT MEET GLOBAL INTEROPERABILITY OR CYBER STANDARDS."

# VALUE PROPOSITION

Clinical informaticians add value to the health sector by bringing technical expertise and practical experience, engaging widely in the design and introduction of clinical systems, championing digital literacy, and providing clinical leadership.

Clinical informaticians provide:

## Expertise

We bring the value of our clinical experience, applying a clinical lens to the juncture of health care, and information systems and technology. This can be done at operational and strategic levels. This expertise supports the development of effective problem definitions and requirements, improved prioritisation and resourcing, and facilitates effective governance and change management.

## Clinical leadership

As clinical informatics roles become more strategic, clinical leadership becomes an important function for successful digital transformation.

## Stakeholder engagement

A clinical background provides credibility when engaging with colleagues, and improving user uptake, understanding and participation.

## Competence and capability

Championing digital literacy and the ongoing development of the health and disability workforce to support the evolution of digitisation and new models of care. We are essential for nurturing and developing future clinical informaticians to develop a sustainable workforce.

## Communication

We are translators and communicators between the disparate groups that work in data and digital aspects of health care. This improves quality, investment, design and health outcomes.

# REFERENCES

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