

# Request for Proposals



November 2017



## 2018 Primary Care Models of Care Evaluation Research Partnership

*A joint research initiative funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand and Ministry of Health.*

### Overview

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) have formed a partnership to invest in high quality research into general practice models of care that provide the essential primary care services through Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) in New Zealand.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the HRC and the Ministry ('the funding partners') are seeking to fund evaluation research that will provide an evidence-base to inform decisions about the future steps for general practice models of care provided by PHOs. The initiative is overseen by a Steering Committee which includes representatives of each funding partner and other relevant organisations.

The research initiative is managed through the HRC's Partnership Programme, through which the HRC forms strategic partnerships with funders and stakeholders to develop the evidence-base in key areas of need. This approach targets resources appropriately and strengthens the links between policy and practice. It also ensures that stakeholders get the answers they need to pressing questions, but costs are split between multiple interest parties.

This RFP describes the research objectives and scope identified by the Steering Committee. Applicants will need to outline how their proposal addresses the RFP and provide a clear justification for the proposed research along with a description of the research team's ability to deliver the specific components of the research. Applicants will also need to provide a fully costed budget.

The Steering Committee prefers a collaborative approach to ensure that a range of approaches/disciplines are included in the research design and to increase the likelihood for effective knowledge transfer. Collaborative research teams may include representatives from the primary care sector, community groups/consumers, health researchers and other research providers, for example.

A total funding pool of approximately \$1.33 million (exclusive of GST) is available for allocation. The Steering Committee invites applications for funding of up to **\$1.33 million** (fully-costed, exclusive of GST) and duration of up to **2 years**.

It is anticipated the contracted project will begin as soon as practicable, with funding available for an immediate start (from July 2018). **Research proposals should realistically be able to be completed within a 24-month timeframe with research results available for informing decision-making.**

## Application procedure

All forms and guidelines are available via [HRC Gateway](#). The process below is outlined in more detail in the ***Application Guidelines for 2018 Primary Care Models of Care Evaluation Research RFP***. These guidelines provide full details on the application process for this RFP.

### STEP 1: INVESTIGATOR BRIEFING MEETING

The Steering Committee will host an Investigator Briefing Meeting in Wellington on **Tuesday 19 December 2017** from **1:00pm** to **4:00pm**. This will be an information session to discuss the RFP, application and assessment process, and will present an opportunity to liaise with other interested parties. Though strongly encouraged, attendance is optional and brief meeting notes will be made available following the meeting. Interested parties who cannot attend may be able participate via tele/videoconference.

Applicants must register their attendance at the Investigator Briefing Meeting by **11 December 2017**. Due to space restrictions, the number of attendees from each interested group may be restricted.

To register your attendance or for more information please contact Scott Aitken, Research Investment Manager (email: [saitken@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:saitken@hrc.govt.nz)). The HRC Partnership Programme team will contact registered parties to confirm details of this Meeting.

### STEP 2: REGISTRATION

Applicants are required to submit a Registration via HRC Gateway (the HRC's online application system) by **1:00pm, Friday 26 January 2018**. This web-based form signals the intent of the applicant to submit a full application.

Once submitted, the Registration is forwarded (via HRC Gateway) to the applicant's host Research Office. The Research Office will need to approve the Registration and forward it to the HRC. For organisations without research offices, the application will be forwarded directly (via HRC Gateway) to the HRC.

Please note that first named investigators and all other named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account, to be able to be included in an application.

### STEP 3: FULL APPLICATION

Applicants are then required to complete a full application using the 2018 Primary Care Models of Care RFP Application Form (JV218-PrimaryCareModels), 2018 Primary Care Models of Care Budget Form (JV218-PrimaryCare-Budget) and the New Zealand Standard CV template, and submit via HRC Gateway by **1:00pm, Monday 26 February 2018**.

Once submitted, the full application is forwarded (via HRC Gateway) to the applicant's host Research Office. The Research Office will need to approve the full application and forward it to the HRC. For organisations without research offices, the application will be forwarded directly (via HRC Gateway) to the HRC.

A complete PDF of the full application is created by the HRC Gateway after the deadline for submission, at which time it can be printed in hard copy and sent to the HRC to arrive by **5:00pm, Monday 5 March 2018**. Refer to the ***Application Guidelines for 2018 Primary Care Models of Care Evaluation Research RFP*** for details of this process.

Applicants must meet the deadlines indicated above for their proposal to be eligible.

## ASSESSMENT

### Step 1: Peer review

The scientific integrity of full applications will be assessed through an external peer review process which is managed by the HRC. This involves comprehensive peer review of all applications undertaken by independent national and international experts.

### Step 2: Applicant rebuttal

Applicants are given an opportunity to view the peer review reports for their application and provide a rebuttal to the comments made. This is not an opportunity to rewrite major sections of a proposal, but rather the opportunity to respond to specific reviewer comments, to answer questions raised by the reviewer, or to clarify an issue so that your proposal may be viewed as equitably as possible by the Assessing Committee.

### Step 3: Assessment

An independent Assessing Committee will then assess full applications (full proposal, peer review reports and applicant rebuttal) using criteria outlined in the ***Application Guidelines for 2018 Primary Care Models of Care Evaluation Research RFP***. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with these criteria.

The Assessing Committee will make recommendations for funding, to be considered and approved by the HRC and Ministry of Health. Applicants will be informed of final funding decisions in **June 2018**.

### Key Dates Summary

Action	Date
Registration for Investigator Briefing Meeting	<b>11 December 2017</b>
Investigator Briefing Meeting (Wellington)	<b>1pm - 4pm, 19 December 2017</b>
Registration due (via HRC Gateway)	<b>1pm, 26 January 2018</b>
Full application due (via HRC Gateway)	<b>1pm, 26 February 2018</b>
Full application hard-copies due	<b>5pm, 5 March 2018</b>
External peer review (managed by the HRC)	<b>March 2018</b>
Applicant rebuttal opens	<b>8am, 9 April 2018</b>
Applicant rebuttal due	<b>1pm, 16 April 2018</b>
Applicants notified of outcome	<b>June 2018</b>

## Background

Primary care has a critical role to play in New Zealand's health system. An ageing population and an ageing workforce, an increasing shortage of General Practitioners and increasing hospital demand are some of the challenges being experienced by the New Zealand primary care sector.

The Primary Health Organisation (PHO) Services Agreement and the Back to Back Agreement with Contracted Providers sets the foundation for a collaborative relationship between the PHO and the DHB to deliver integrated healthcare services. This partnership-based approach has patients at the centre, in which care is delivered closer to home by trusted, motivated, and supported health professionals working in an effective and efficient manner, and requires strong clinical leadership to succeed.

In response to challenges, the primary care sector has responded differently to cope with pressure on resources and demand. There currently exist a range of general practice models of care in New Zealand, including traditional General Practitioner-centred models, Medical Home models and corporate ownership models.

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and the Ministry of Health have established a joint initiative to fund evaluation research into the effectiveness of the current general practice models of care, the elements that currently exist in the New Zealand primary care sector for managing system demand and improving patient experience of care, and how they align with the New Zealand Health Strategy and Primary Health Care Strategy themes and objectives. This initiative is managed by a Steering Committee which includes representatives of each funding partner and other relevant organisations.

This evaluation research will feed back into collaborative learning networks for the sector and inform ongoing selection and refinement of the general practice models of care.

## Research Project Requirements

### RESEARCH APPROACH

Applicants will need to outline how their proposal addresses the scope of the RFP and provide a clear justification for the proposed approach along with a description of the research team's ability to deliver the specific components of the research. Applicants will also need to provide a fully costed budget.

The research methodology should be an evaluation research<sup>1</sup> approach, with a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodology. It is anticipated that the development of the methodology, establishment of the research team and calculation of the research budget will be reflective of the scope of the proposed research project and meet the requirements of this RFP.

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<sup>1</sup> **Evaluation and Evaluation Research:** This RFP is seeking evaluation research which has many similarities to and synergies with evaluation, but includes additional requirements. **Evaluation** involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programmes, policies, personnel, products and organisations to improve their effectiveness (*American Evaluation Association*). However, **evaluation research** includes the additional requirements that the proposal may be based on a specific hypothesis that can be tested, the research will be linked to relevant theory, the results are intended to be replicated or generalised across studies and the research will be disclosed for professional scrutiny and critique. Evaluation research would also include the development of novel methods for evaluation. *The activity undertaken in response to this RFP should be evaluation research.*

Researchers are strongly encouraged to work in collaboration with key partners such as representatives from the primary care sector (specifically those implementing the different models of care), community groups/consumers and other research providers to increase the likelihood for effective knowledge transfer.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of research funded through this RFP are to:

1. Describe the three general practice models of care included in the research scope below and their components, including the evolution and implementation of the three general practice models, and identify the components that meet the characteristics of good primary care<sup>2</sup>.
2. Describe and evaluate the impact of the three general practice models included in the research scope below on each of the following domains:
  - Patient experience of care (patient-centred, accessible, affordable, convenient, continuous and integrated).
  - Demand on secondary services encompassing both planned hospitalisations (elective admissions) and unplanned hospitalisations (Emergency Department attendances and acute admissions including end of life care).
  - Quality of care and health equity (distribution of impacts of quality of care and patient outcomes across different population groups and deprivation levels).
  - Workforce (happier and sustainable workforce working to the top of their scope).
  - Financially sustainable primary care.
3. Evaluate the system enablers for successful implementation of innovative general practice models of care.

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### <sup>2</sup> Characteristics of good primary care that includes:

- Accessible
- Affordable
- Convenient
- Comprehensive
- Integrated with secondary care and community
- Continuous
- Patient centred
- Provide timely, accessible evidence based diagnosis
- Provide effective and efficient service delivery
- Offer and manage referral pathways
- Responsive to population need
- Makes full use of primary care workforce (working to the top of their scope in interdisciplinary teams)

## RESEARCH SCOPE

This RFP provides an opportunity for collaborative research teams, including DHBs, primary care providers, community groups/consumers and health researchers (tertiary institutes and other research organisations), to undertake evaluation research on the following three general practice models of care currently in use in New Zealand:

- Medical Home model, including Health Care Home (HCH) and other similar comprehensive models.
- Corporate ownership model that features low patient fees, is accessible, serves large population catchment areas, and acute episodic treatment.
- Traditional model: General Practitioner-centred with nurses supporting.

Individual instances of these models of care may include Integrated Family Health Centre (IFHC) services and/or Health and Social Care services.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS

A research proposal will need to provide information on:

- The models of care to be evaluated through the research project (as detailed under Research Scope).
- The appropriateness, soundness and rigour of the study methodology and design.
- How the research and methodology are oriented towards identifying opportunities for and approaches to, change and improvement, resulting in a health, health service or health system benefit (rather than solely focusing on describing existing systems and issues).
- How research teams will engage key stakeholders such as representatives from the primary care sector (specifically those implementing the different models of care), community groups/consumers and other research providers etc., at the different stages of the research project. It is expected that applicants will make active use of stakeholder networks to engage a wide range of parties in discussion from research formation to dissemination. Applicants need to demonstrate engagement and/or involvement of key participants.
- A detailed project management plan for all stages of the research project to ensure the proposed research can realistically be completed within the required timeframe.
- The potential for knowledge transfer and the processes or steps in place that will support uptake of research findings, including the strategy for dissemination and implementation of findings; how dissemination strategies will be tailored to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders so the results are of maximum utility; how the potential for wider impact is reflected in the dissemination strategy; and the planned timeframe and forum for implementation.
- The mix of expertise within the research team. This may include seeking research design and method expertise, the involvement of researchers with extensive primary care experience, and/or collaborating with service providers, health and disability support workers and consumers, for example. An outline of the project management and organisational support available to the project should be included, with appropriate project management FTE included in the research budget as applicable.
- The consideration of health equity issues and the specific health needs of Māori and Pacific peoples within the context of the research topic.

## BUDGET

A total funding pool of approximately \$1.33 million (exclusive of GST) is available for allocation. The Steering Committee invites applications for funding of up to **\$1.33 million** (fully-costed, exclusive of GST) and duration of up to **2 years**.

Funding will be available for an immediate start for the research project (from July 2018). Please carefully consider the start date, as applicants will be held to what they have proposed. Applicants should take into account the timeframe for obtaining ethical approval (if appropriate) and should ensure that this doesn't delay the start of the research project.

Applicants should note that if competing proposals are equal in terms of their scientific value, the funding partners will consider best value for money offered by each proposal.

## PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Actual deliverables will be confirmed with a selected provider; however, deliverables must include the following elements:

- An interim deliverable report (due at 12 months) detailing interim results and findings.
- A final deliverable report detailing results, key findings and recommendations of the complete programme of research. The report will also be required to include an outline of any planned implementation activities, i.e., a plan outlining how any new knowledge resulting from the research will be translated to facilitate clinical practice change in New Zealand (where relevant), including the processes or steps that will support uptake of the research findings.

The research provider may also be required to provide verbal presentations to the Steering Committee on research progress and/or findings.

In addition to research deliverables, **quarterly** progress reports will also be required for the project. These reports detail progress of the project and highlight any risks to its progress. The research provider will complete and submit their progress reports via the HRC's online reporting system.

An **HRC end of contract** report is also required upon completion of the research activity.

## RESEARCH TEAM AND ENGAGEMENT OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Applicants responding to this RFP will have experience in undertaking health research, a strong academic record and a diverse range of skills that enables them to effectively work with research stakeholders.

It is expected that the composition of research teams developing applications in response to this RFP will reflect the focus of the initiative and that teams will work within an appropriate governance structure.

The Steering Committee is strongly supportive of collaborative approaches to this research initiative. This may include but is not limited to partnerships between research teams, partnerships with primary care provider(s), and partnerships with other potential end-users.

All applications submitted in response to this RFP should provide clear details of how research teams will engage key stakeholders in the primary care sector and the wider health care community at the different stages of the research project, particularly around communication and implementation of the results of the research.

## DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Dissemination of the research findings nationally will be an important component of the research project. Applications should incorporate the most appropriate methods for communication of research results to a broad range of stakeholders (including the funding partners).

The research provider will be expected to ensure that all information is tailored to the needs of the intended audience, so that research findings can be of maximum utility. It is also expected that the quality of the research will be reflected through publication in international, peer-reviewed journals.

## General Notes

### DECISION ADVICE

No legal obligations will arise between the funding partners and applicants for this Request for Proposals until such time as the HRC enters into a contract with the successful applicant.

### PRIVACY PROVISIONS

In the event that an application is successful, the HRC reserves the right to release applicants' names, details of the host institution/company, contact details (work phone, fax or email), contract title and funding awarded for public interest purposes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Health Research Council of New Zealand Act 1990.

### HRC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

This RFP is a component of the HRC's Partnership Programme, through which the HRC forms strategic partnerships with funders and stakeholders to target resources towards developing the evidence-base in key areas of need and strengthen the links between policy and practice. This collaborative approach to research ensures that stakeholders obtain the answers to pressing questions, but split the cost with multiple interested parties. The HRC's processes ensure that the track record of the research team, the scientific merit and the design and methods of the proposal will deliver the highest quality of evidence. Only limited funds are available to launch these co-operative research initiatives and the opportunities are strictly prioritised.

### MAILING ADDRESS

Printed hard copies of applications should be sent to the Health Research Council's office as shown below:

<i>Mailing Address:</i> Health Research Council of New Zealand PO Box 5541, Wellesley Street AUCKLAND <i>Attn: Scott Aitken</i>	<i>Physical/Courier Address:</i> Health Research Council of New Zealand Level 3, 110 Stanley Street AUCKLAND <i>Attn: Scott Aitken</i>
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### ENQUIRIES

All enquiries related to this Request for Proposals should be directed to Scott Aitken, Research Investment Manager, Research Partnerships (09 282 4135 or [saitken@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:saitken@hrc.govt.nz)).