



Public Health Observatory  
New Zealand  
Te Rōpū Mātai Hauora Pāpori  
O Aotearoa

Newsletter 1

December 2021

Kei āku nui, kei āku rahi, tēnā rā kōutou

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Public Health Observatory New Zealand (PHONZ). PHONZ has been established to provide a forum for people interested in public health intelligence to collaborate, exchange ideas, and meet other people locally, nationally and internationally with similar interests and passions. It will be a repository for news, data, analytical tools, information about public health intelligence and provide workforce development opportunities.

The New Zealand health system is undergoing great change, which presents an ideal opportunity for PHONZ. Like all health systems, Aotearoa continues to collect and collate vast quantities of data at an increasing rate. These data are being turned into information at great speed through various types of analysis, the proliferation of dashboards, and other visual aids (graphs, tables etc). These stages are essentially 'computer' or machine-driven and underpin much of our current decision-making.

In contrast, our health system has a limited and fragmented health intelligence (ie human) capacity and capability. Intelligence involves the interpretation, communication and dissemination of information. PHONZ will address these deficiencies by providing Aotearoa with a forum for 'intelligence-driven' decision making. The evaluation of decision-making leads to enhanced knowledge and understanding of our health system and improves the health outcomes for all New Zealanders'. PHONZ will be a collective platform of support to develop strategies on how public health intelligence can be used to drive planning and commissioning within the system. PHONZ aims to provide intelligence for equitable health outcomes.

We have established a steering group to guide the establishment and strategic direction of PHONZ. The members are:

- Barry Borman, Professor of Epidemiology, Massey University (b.borman@massey.ac.nz)
- Corina Grey, public health physician and epidemiologist, Auckland DHB, and currently seconded to the Transition Unit (CorinaG@adhb.govt.nz)
- Peter Himona, Senior Analyst, Māori Health Insights, Māori Health, Ministry of Health (Peter.Himona@health.govt.nz)
- Tim Hopley, Senior Advisor, Environmental and Border Health, Ministry of Health (Tim.Hopley@health.govt.nz)

- Kurt Janssen, CEO, Orbica, Christchurch (kurt@orbica.world)
- Ron King, Intelligence and Surveillance Specialist, ARPHS (RonK@adhb.govt.nz)
- Dr Chris Skelly, Analytical Programme Manager, Department of Health and Social Care, UK
- Dyfed Thomas, Manager, The Public Health Intelligence and Policy (PHIP) team, Waikato DHB (Dyfed.Thomas@waikatodhb.health.nz)

Support for PHONZ has exceeded our initial expectations, with around 60 people currently on our membership list. These include people from government agencies, District Health Boards, Public Health Units, Primary Health Organisations, universities, and the private sector.

We have created a PHONZ tab on the EHINZ website (<https://www.ehinz.ac.nz/projects/public-health-observatory-of-nz/>) as an interim measure until we create a PHONZ specific website. And also social media pages for PHONZ on LinkedIn (Public Health Observatory NZ) and Twitter (@PHObservatoryNZ)

We propose holding virtual meetings and presentations for members on various topics to share information, break down silos, and connect people. We are aiming to have the first virtual meeting early in 2022.

We are looking at opportunities to develop workforce training courses and create special interest groups within PHONZ, such as Geospatial, Māori, and Pacific.

Please do not hesitate to circulate our newsletter to your colleagues and encourage them to join PHONZ. There is no cost for joining. Communications will be limited to a newsletter and invitations for joining virtual presentations and contributing items of news, information, work and studies you are doing in the field of public health intelligence.

If you would like to become a member of PHONZ, please enter your details [here](#).

In the meantime, the Steering Group wish you and your whānau all the very best for a very happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to you joining us in PHONZ in 2022.

Ngā mihi nui

The Steering Group, PHONZ