



COLLABORATIVE
AOTEAROA

Modernising the Health Care Home (HCH) Model of Care – Feilding Health Care

CASE STUDY – FOR REFERENCE (FEBRUARY 2025)



Modernising the Health Care Home (HCH) Model of Care (MoC) – Feilding Health Care

Case Study

Nicky Hart & Chris Iwikau

About this resource:

This case study was produced through the generosity of Nicky Hart & Chris Iwikau from Feilding Health Care. The content and reflections of their work together is hoped to inspire other General Practices to modernise their HCH model of care.

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Acknowledgement

Collaborative Aotearoa extends their gratitude for this case study to significantly enrich our existing resources in supporting the modernising of the Health Care Home (HCH) Model of Care (MoC) in Primary Care. By generously sharing their time, expertise, and



passion, this case study aims to empower others across Aotearoa to consider both novel and proven approaches.

In the development of this document the team gives credit to:

- Nicky Hart – CEO, Feilding Health Care
- Chris Iwikau – Acute Care Lead (Paramedic), Feilding Health Care
- Feilding Health Care
- THINK Hauora

Introduction

Nicky has worked with Feilding Health Care since 2017 as CEO. Prior to that, Nicky worked in a variety of senior roles at national and regional levels in primary health care with a focus on change management and business improvement. Nicky attended Massey University in Palmerston North where she obtained a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Management.

Chris is the Acute Care Lead (Paramedic) at Feilding Health Care and brings 24 years of experience as a career and volunteer ambulance officer. His background spans frontline road and helicopter response, clinical education, management, and service improvement, including responding to the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake. Chris provides acute and urgent care to patients and supports day-to-day patient flow. He also mentors and trains clinicians in emergency care response.

The site visit to Feilding Health Care took place in January 2025. All information was accurate at the time of the case study capture.





About Feilding Health Care

Feilding Health Care is in Feilding – the largest town in the Manawatū district, situated 20km from Palmerston North. The practice provides services to the wider Manawatū area, that has a population of around 30,000 people. The enrolled population is approximately 21,000 people.

Feilding Health Care (FHC) has embraced the Health Care Home (HCH) model, providing integrated primary health care services to their community. Established eight years ago, FHC offers a comprehensive range of care, in collaboration with other on-site services, including General Practice (GP), pharmacy, radiology, physiotherapy, mental health, Iwi providers and Te Whatu Ora/Health New Zealand services, all within a purpose-built facility designed for patient and whānau comfort.

FHC's adoption of the HCH model emphasises a collaborative and holistic approach to patient care. By integrating various health services under one roof, patients benefit from coordinated care that addresses multiple health needs efficiently. This model has been instrumental in training, retaining, and supporting medical staff, offering them flexibility and variety in their careers, which has proven attractive to both new and seasoned healthcare professionals.

A Health Care Home journey

The Health Care Home (HCH) model in New Zealand is an innovative approach to primary health care, aiming to enhance service quality, sustainability, and patient and staff experiences. Introduced over a decade ago, the model has been adopted by more than 300 General Practices nationwide, covering a significant portion of the population.

The HCH model draws inspiration from international trends in primary health care, emphasising proactive, team-based approaches tailored to individual patient and whānau (family) needs. It incorporates elements such as clinical phone triage, flexible appointment systems, and the integration of technology to facilitate patient interactions and care management.

The HCH model in Aotearoa New Zealand is framed within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, embracing Māori models of health and deliver tangible benefits for Māori and other priority populations. This approach ensures that health services are culturally appropriate and accessible, addressing longstanding health inequities. From the time of the rollout of HCH in 2017, the success has been a collaborative effort involving district health boards (DHBs), primary health organisations (PHOs), and individual General Practices.



Feilding Health Care was in the first tranche of Health Care Home (HCH) being rolled out across Aotearoa.

The role of paramedics in primary care

The healthcare landscape is changing rapidly, placing increasing demands on General Practices to deliver high-quality, accessible care to diverse patient populations. In response, integrating paramedics and Extended Care Paramedics (ECPs) into General Practice teams is becoming a valuable strategy to enhance service delivery, improve patient outcomes, and ease pressures on traditional healthcare roles. These professionals bring extensive expertise in acute care, patient assessment, and emergency response, strengthening the capacity of primary care teams.

The Patient Services Team at FHC who field calls from patients, have had training around identifying certain key words and listening to the caller to help establish the urgency of the call, e.g. description of chest pain or shortness of breath. For these key words, staff have a pathway to follow: put the call on hold and contact one of the paramedics in the team to triage the call. This may result in advising the patient to ring an ambulance, or the person is placed in an urgent slot in the patient queue, to see one of the on-site health professionals.

Impact of capacity through managing in-hours care

“Presentations to after-hours is relatively static, with some drop-off evident. The impact on after-hour care is shown through the Practice not being as busy as it was in previous times”, Nicky notes.

“Capacity impact is hard to measure, however, staff have shared they are feeling like they can manage the dynamic nature of the Practice better, particularly with the support of interdisciplinary health professionals when people present for more urgent care. I have no doubt that rolling out paramedics across the district would positively impact after-hour presentation blockages”.

Feilding Health Care has fully engaged with the Comprehensive Primary Care Team (CPCT) roll-out through Te Whatu Ora / Health New Zealand. Research shows that expanding the skill mix available to primary care teams increases community access and improves equity outcomes. These roles have proven to management and staff of Feilding Health Centre that an interdisciplinary approach to meeting community need benefits all aspects of care – for the business, staff, the community and has flow-on effect to reduce health system costs through hospital avoidance.



The key benefits of managing demand in-hours include:

- Reduced after-hours presentations and a less busy practice after-hours, indicating better daytime care and management of patient needs.
- Reduced stress and better capacity management for staff, as they feel there is a backup system and more support available.
- Patients can receive treatment locally without having to wait for hours in the emergency department.
- Improved patient experience, with reduced waiting times and a sense that their concerns are taken more seriously.
- The practice can handle more acute and urgent cases during regular hours, rather than having them escalate to the emergency department.

By managing demand effectively during regular hours, this has had a positive impact on both the practice's capacity and the patient experience.

Managing Mondays

Mondays have historically been impacted by high presentations for after-hour care. Because a wider breadth of care is being delivered in-hours, this has impacted presentations across the board.

Current data indicates that Feilding Health Centre receives between 500 and 1200 phone calls each Monday. The team already have an established culture of continuous improvement and measuring, so a key approach for workflow demand has been reviewing the request for same-day appointments and matching the staff requirements to best meet those needs.

Wraparound care provided appreciated by community

The clinic receives feedback in various ways. For those community members who have found they have either avoided a hospital stay or experienced having their care managed in a more fast-tracked manner due to the work-up by the team at the Practice, the results are positive, particularly around reduced waiting times.

In reviewing the data provided by FHC of open feedback received over the 12-month period of 2024, it is clear the community are impressed.. In analysing the data, several key themes emerge, reflecting patient experiences and perceptions of the healthcare services.



An engaged and grateful team

An explicit theme identified at Feilding Health Care is the breadth of connection and passion to work in this environment.

“I’ve been working in primary care for a long time, and I literally love it and never want to work anywhere else. A key reason for that is it’s the one sector or place that most families come for their whole life. The majority of New Zealanders will be in contact with primary care services across the lifespan, so we can really influence the direction of people’s lives”, Nicky shared.

For Chris, having spent half of his working life out on ambulances, working in primary care has given him an opportunity to use a paramedic subset of skills to provide direct care for a patient early.

“When the opportunity came up to jump on board here, there was a sense of pioneering for a change, to a more collaborative approach, with a multi-skilled team. The challenge of being able to integrate from what we do out on the road into the clinical setting, into primary care, I like the idea of the ambulance being at the top of the cliff, rather than being the one picking up pieces at the bottom. Primary care gives us opportunity to care for community needs before needing to touch the hospital or ambulance services”.

“When things are flowing well, it means that services are available for more people in the community. If we can make processes better for our current patients, then our future patients will get a better deal because there’s more access and more reliability within the Practice.”

An ongoing continuous improvement philosophy

Feilding Health Care’s integrated model not only enhances patient care but also fosters a supportive work environment for healthcare professionals. By reducing burnout and promoting work-life balance, the model has successfully retained a large, dedicated team of senior doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, paramedics and other extended care team members who mentor newer staff. This approach has been pivotal in addressing national healthcare workforce challenges and ensuring the delivery of high-quality care to the community.

In summary, Feilding Health Care’s implementation of the Health Care Home model and ongoing improvements exemplifies a successful, integrated approach to primary health care, benefiting both patients and healthcare providers in the Manawatū region.



Resources

Supplementary to this written case study, you can hear from Nicky and Chris on the case study video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkRbCGj3o1M>

To learn more about Health Care Home, visit the Collaborative Aotearoa website at <https://collab.org.nz/model-of-care/interactive-model-of-care/>