



MEDIA RELEASE

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Collaborative Aotearoa welcomes Access and Choice Programme progress report and introduces Collab Coach to support national scale-up

Collaborative Aotearoa welcomes the release of *Access and Choice Programme: Monitoring Report on Progress and Achievements at Five Years* by Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission.

The report highlights the significant impact of the Access and Choice Programme since its inception in 2019, particularly the delivery of mental wellbeing support to over 207,000 people in the past year. However, it also identifies the need for increased productivity and sustained scaling to meet the programme's target of 325,000 people accessing services annually by 2026.

As an organisation dedicated to innovation and equity in primary care, Collaborative Aotearoa is proud to support the Access and Choice programme through the development of digital tools that enable frontline success.

In partnership with innovation partner Intervengine, we have developed Collab Coach – a practical, user-friendly digital tool designed to empower health coaches and health improvement practitioners (HIPs) to manage caseloads, improve service quality, and engage more whānau effectively. The tool aligns with the Integrated Primary Mental Health and Addiction (IPMHA) model and is part of our broader effort to support workforce productivity and equity of access.

"Collab Coach was created in response to feedback from the sector and frontline health coaches. It's designed to support patients with behaviour change – delivering intervention that ultimately enables people to build to a state of wellbeing" says Jess Morgan-French, CEO of Collaborative Aotearoa. "This tool supports the health coaching and health improvement practitioner workforce to deliver high-quality, person-centred care – and to meet the needs of more whānau, faster."

Collab Coach is being supported and trialed by Health Hawkes Bay, THINK Hauora, and Whanganui Regional Health Network. These organisations are testing the patient-centered app and platform, with an evaluation due later this year.

With recommendations in the report calling for enhanced productivity, better utilisation of roles, and digital enablement, Collaborative Aotearoa encourages providers and sector partners to explore how Collab Coach can assist in scaling services while maintaining quality and cultural responsiveness.

We look forward to continuing to partner with the sector to ensure the Access and Choice programme realises its full potential, supporting early, equitable, and meaningful mental health and wellbeing care for all people in Aotearoa.

You can read the full Access and Choice Report [Here](#).

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About Collaborative Aotearoa

Collaborative Aotearoa (the Collaborative) is a national network of primary health care organisations and supporting partners committed to pursuing a vision focused on the health and wellbeing of whānau and communities.

The Collaborative has committed to expanding its reach to support its networks and continue to bring focus to equitable access to more general practices and communities across Aotearoa.

<https://collab.org.nz/>