

What is the National Health Index?

The National Health Index has been part of the New Zealand health system for many years. The number is usually allocated to you at birth.

The National Health Index holds information on:

- names and addresses
- ethnicity, date of birth, date of death and gender
- New Zealand residency status.

Why is the National Health Index number used?

- It helps to avoid the health information of people with the same name or with similar names getting mixed up.
- It allows health professionals involved in your care to share health information without using your name and address. This protects your privacy.

Who can read my National Health Index information?

Only health agencies that are involved in providing health services can read and use your National Health Index information. The New Zealand Health Information Service, which is part of the Ministry of Health, manages and maintains the National Health Index under the guidance of the Health Information Privacy Code 1994.

If you would like more information, a National Health Index brochure is available from the New Zealand Health Information Service:

Address: PO Box 5013, Wellington
Telephone: (04) 922-1800
Fax: (04) 922-1899
Email: information@nzhis.govt.nz
Website: <http://www.nzhis.govt.nz>

What happens to my health information?

When you enrol with a Primary Health Organisation your health information will still be kept with your health service or doctor. To ensure you get the best possible health care, your GP or nurse may send some of your health information to other health professionals who are directly involved in your health care.

Why do you want to know about my ethnicity?

For a number of reasons some ethnic groups have poorer health than others and are missing out on health care. Primary Health Organisations need to know the ethnic group of people enrolled with them so that services can be arranged to meet their needs.

Can I see my enrolment details and medical notes to check and change, if necessary, the information held about me?

Yes – ask about this at reception.

All of your enrolment and health information will be collected, stored and used under the guidance of the Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994.

What is the Health Information Privacy Code 1994?

This code was prepared by the Privacy Commissioner in 1994 to ensure that your privacy is protected. The code is enforceable by law.

Your health service may have copies of the *Health Information Privacy Code* Fact Sheets. If not, you can get them from the Privacy Commissioner:

Address: PO Box 466, Auckland
Telephone: call free 0800 803 909
Fax: (09) 302 2305
Email: privacy@iprolink.co.nz
Website: www.privacy.org.nz

To find out about the other Primary Health Organisations in your area, contact your local District Health Board.

Your rights

You have rights when you receive health or disability services whether you pay for them or not. If you would like to find out more about your rights, or if you have any complaint about the care you receive, you can get help from your local advisory service and Health and Disability Commissioner:

- by phoning 0800 11 22 33
- or you can visit the Health and Disability Commissioner's website at www.hdc.org.nz
- or you can email hdc@hdc.org.nz

Primary Health Organisations are not allowed to refuse to enrol you because you have poor health or require more health care. If you feel you have been unfairly refused enrolment, contact your local District Health Board. All Primary Health Organisation enrolments must comply with the Human Rights Act 1993.



Enrolling with a Primary Health Organisation

Answering your Questions

Our health service is part of a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) and we would like you to enrol. Enrolment means you plan to get most of your ongoing health care here and, together, we plan to meet your health needs.

You will still get the same health services you get from us now. In addition, we will be working with our network of health professionals to improve the health of everyone enrolled with us.

Primary Health Organisation (PHO)

What is primary health care?

Primary health care is usually the first contact you have with health professionals; for example, when you visit your GP and nurse or when a nurse visits you at the marae health clinic.

It is not hospital care but professional health care that is probably near to where you and your family or whānau live and work.

Your GP and nurse provide most of your primary health care.

What are Primary Health Organisations?

- They are local groups of primary health care providers responsible for organising and delivering primary health care to meet the needs of those enrolled with them.
- They will give their communities, iwi and enrolled people the opportunity to have their say about the services the Primary Health Organisation provides.
- They get a set amount of funding from the Government to subsidise a range of health services. The funding is based on the numbers and characteristics (eg, age, sex, ethnicity)

of people enrolled with them. The funding will pay for services to:

- provide care and treatment when people are ill
- help people to stay healthy
- reach out to those groups in their community who have poor health or who are missing out on primary health care.

- The Government plans to increase funding to Primary Health Organisations with the aim of reducing the cost of primary health care for everyone over time.

Can I enrol with two Primary Health Organisations?

No. You should enrol with the service you use most often. You can still visit other primary health care professionals but there are benefits when you get most of your health care from your usual doctor, nurse or health service.

Can I see another doctor or primary health care professional who doesn't belong to my Primary Health Organisation?

Yes.

What happens if I visit another service?

The Ministry of Health will give your Primary Health Organisation the date of your visit but will NOT give the name of the health service, the reason for your visit or any health information. The health service will check with you about sending your health information to your usual doctor or health service.

What will happen if I do not enrol with a Primary Health Organisation?

Enrolment is voluntary. If you choose not to enrol, you will still be able to visit any primary health care professional to get the care you need. Your health professional will still receive any subsidy the Government currently gives them.

Can I enrol my children?

Yes, you can enrol any children in your care if they are 16 years of age or under. Ask at reception to find out what you need to do.

Can I enrol other members of my family or whānau?

No, if they are over the age of 16 they need to enrol themselves, unless you have Power of Attorney or you are their

authorised representative. You can take enrolment forms and information home for other adult family members. Ask at reception to find out what you need to do.

Will I still need to pay to see my GP or nurse?

You will still have to pay to see your GP or nurse in most areas. In areas where there are higher numbers of people with poorer health, some Primary Health Organisations may be able to offer reduced fees, or even free care, immediately.

All Primary Health Organisation health services will display their standard charges. If you have any questions about the health services provided or the cost, ask at reception.

What if I want to change my GP and enrol somewhere else?

You can leave or change your Primary Health Organisation or GP at any time. The Ministry of Health will advise your old Primary Health Organisation that you have enrolled somewhere else, but will NOT give the name of your new health service or Primary Health Organisation. Your new Primary Health Organisation

will now receive funding for you instead of your old Primary Health Organisation.

If I enrol, will I still be able to use my Community Services Card?

Yes, you can still use your Community Services Card for all the same services.

Some people enrolled with Primary Health Organisations may soon find they do not need their Community Services Card to get low-cost health care, but hold on to it in case, for example, you are out of town and need to see a doctor.

For more information about getting the Community Services Card you can contact:

Work and Income New Zealand toll free 0800 999 999.

What happens to my enrolment information?

When you enrol, the Primary Health Organisation will use the information collected from you to build an enrolment register. This register is sent to the Ministry of Health where your information will remain confidential.

The Ministry of Health needs this information to:

- calculate the funding that is given to the Primary Health Organisation
- correct your details on the National Health Index
- monitor quality of care.

The following information is kept:

- name and address
- date of birth, gender, and ethnicity
- Community Services Card number including expiry date (if applicable) and High User Health Card number including expiry date (if applicable)
- National Health Index number if known by the Primary Health Organisation
- whether you are a New Zealand resident or not. If you are not a New Zealand resident but you are eligible for New Zealand health services, you can enrol. This residency information updates your National Health Index information for broader health funding purposes
- the date of your enrolment and the date you last visited your doctor or nurse. The reason for your visit will not be sent to the Ministry of Health.