



## Karo keeps up with health changes

Kia ora everyone

We hope you've all survived the winter and can take heart that spring is just around the corner. Yay!

It's been six months since the last Karo newsletter, a sign of how hectic 2011 has been. That's largely due to the ongoing shake-up and mergers of PHOs. As well as merging databases and writing new software, we've recently invested in a new server and software that can meet the needs of the new, larger PHOs, as well as the small and medium ones we've always looked after.

Our work in other areas continues. The ABC smoking indicators we piloted last year have gone live. We're now involved in another PPP pilot, testing indicators for CVD and Diabetes.

We've also updated the Tamariki Ora Advanced Form in line with the new Ministry of Health schedule, and are looking at ways to provide you with an online reporting service that will give you easy access to your data whenever you need it.

In the midst of all the turmoil, it's important to make sure your systems and practices are robust. This is where Karo's financial risk assessment tool comes into its own, as many of you have discovered. Please let us know if you need our help in any way.

Nga mihi

Susan, Catherine and Patricia (the Karo team)

## PHO mergers continue

PHO mergers have continued to dominate the health landscape in 2011. We know how much work has been involved for all our clients. There's been a trickle-down effect on Karo's workload too.

In the last twelve months, the number of PHOs who use our software for their register management has decreased from 27 to 11, while the number of patients has remained roughly the same. The new, merged PHOs we are working with include the National Hauora Coalition, Te Awakairangi, Cosine, Alliance Health Care and Well Health PHO.

Change on this scale is always challenging. As everyone grapples with new alliances, boards and workloads, our aim has been to make the transition as painless as possible in our area of expertise: register management

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and data gathering. We've been busy writing new software and merging databases, all the while trying to stay calm and keep things feeling like 'business as usual' for our clients. We hope we've succeeded in making your jobs a little easier – or at least no harder – so you can focus on providing a quality service for your patients.

## Flash new server helps Karo meet needs of bigger PHOs

The formation of larger PHOs has prompted Karo to invest in a bigger, better server with more bells and whistles. We're also shifting our software from Microsoft Access to MSSQL (this will be gobbledeygook to everyone except geeks!), so we can handle the data needs of large PHOs as well as small and medium ones.

The new server and software will enable us to process data from larger numbers of patients faster and more efficiently. On a test run the other day, a job that used to take us two hours got done in five minutes. Susan is officially in love with the new purchase!

## ABC smoking indicators go live

The ABC smoking indicators went live on 1 January 2011 and the results are interesting. Of the PHOs we work with, everyone has recorded the smoking status of more than 50 per cent of their patients and most

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will easily reach the 70 per cent threshold for accessing the funding for the Brief Advice and Smoking Cessation indicator. The percentage of patients who are smokers varies enormously from 15-50 per cent for all patients and 25-50 per cent for high needs patients.

It's good to see the Brief Advice and Cessation Support starting to be recorded, with an average of 20 per cent of smokers having been given brief advice and 5 per cent cessation support.

## **Karo to test CVD and Diabetes Phase 2 indicators**

No sooner have we finished one pilot and got it up and running, then along comes another one. This time Karo is working with the PHO Performance Programme to pilot the Phase 2 Indicators for CVD and Diabetes. We've begun contacting PHOs and practices who might be keen to take part in the pilot. We will extract and analyse their patients' data this month and prepare a report for the PPP Advisory Group by the end of September.

We will test four Phase 2 Indicators in the pilot. The first three indicators are the number of enrolled people in the PHO coded with Ischaemic CVD who are on 1) lipid-lowering medication, 2) anti-thrombotic medication, 3) blood pressure-lowering medication.

The fourth indicator is the number of enrolled people in the PHO coded with diagnosed Diabetes who have had confirmed microalbuminuria, or who are coded with chronic renal failure or diabetic nephropathy and are on an ACE inhibitor or A2 receptor agonist.

The indicators will be refined in light of the pilot's findings. Baseline data of all PHOs will be collected in the first half of next year, and the indicators will be fully implemented from July 2012.

## **Financial audit tool still a winner**

Karo's financial risk assessment tool continues to be worth its weight in gold. While most people's attention has understandably been on changes to the PHOs, the early mergers are remembering to check their risk and give the tool a go. A few days ago, one excited practice manager rang Susan to say she'd just used the tool to assess 100 patient forms and only came up with one unsigned form. She was relieved and delighted to know

that her systems are efficient and robust.

Remember: Karo's audit tool is affordable, easy to use and can save PHOs thousands of dollars. While many of you have now been audited by the Ministry of Health, we recommend that you go through this process every couple of years as it is easy for practices to slip into bad habits without realising the financial impact.

A demo version of the audit tool is available [here](#)

## **Installation of new Tamariki Ora Advanced Form on track**

Nearly all Karo's clients have installed the new Tamariki Ora Advanced Form. Well done, everybody! We've updated the form and revised the spreadsheet in line with the new Ministry of Health Well Child schedule. The aim is to meet new MoH reporting requirements that come into effect on 31 December 2011.

We're also keen to begin providing an online reporting service so that practices can log on at any time and check their Tamariki Ora data. Online reporting is the way of the future. Our goal is to extend the online service over time to cover all the data you send us in your quarterly reports. We will keep you posted on developments.

## **Karo supports Indian economic development project**

In Susan's spare time (ha, ha!) she has been helping UnionAID, a New Zealand charitable trust, set up an online survey to evaluate an economic development project with the Tamil Nadu Labour Union in India. Economist Gareth Morgan has agreed to match UnionAID funding dollar for dollar up to \$30,000 a year.

The survey will look at indicators like level of family income, family debt, and the number of children (girls in particular) going to school.

Using an online tool like LimeSurvey, it's possible for data loaded in India to be analysed immediately in New Zealand, improving opportunities for collaboration and support across the globe. If you're interested in knowing more about this project, please contact Susan at [susan@karo.co.nz](mailto:susan@karo.co.nz) or go to UnionAID at <http://union-aid.org.nz/>

**Please feel free to forward this newsletter on to your practices if you want to.**

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