

How can primary care be more accessible to patients 'outside the square'?

One of the most important developments in primary care in NZ since 2000 has been the emphasis on addressing 'barriers to access' to primary care. We now have a detailed understanding of what prevents people who need primary care from accessing services, and affordable fees is only one piece of the puzzle. Creating a primary care environment that is truly accessible does require some thinking outside the square from PHOs and primary care practices, as the right type of support from DHBs and central government. There is much that can be learnt from international examples and encouraging local practices, based on more effective use of available data, and changing models of care.