

2020 Health Delivery Research Investment Round

Questions & Answers

1. Why was the HRC's New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream redesigned?

Health research in New Zealand is in a period of evolution and growth, guided by the [New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027](#) (NZHRS). The NZHRS sets out a coordinated approach for implementation of 10 key Actions, led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Health, and the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC). The [New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework](#) was the first Action to be completed under the NZHRS. It is a guide for research funders and researchers, setting directions for *how* and *why* health research needs to be done in New Zealand to best deliver on high-level health and social outcomes, leaving *what* research is done up to researchers. It aims to achieve better connection, communication and coordination across the health research system, and sets out clear roles and responsibilities for this. Government health research funders such as the HRC are required to align with the Prioritisation Framework, and we are starting by aligning the design and processes for our investment in health delivery research. Redesigning the HRC's investment opportunities to enable and grow more health delivery research in the settings where it is needed most is a Government priority reflected in the NZHRS.

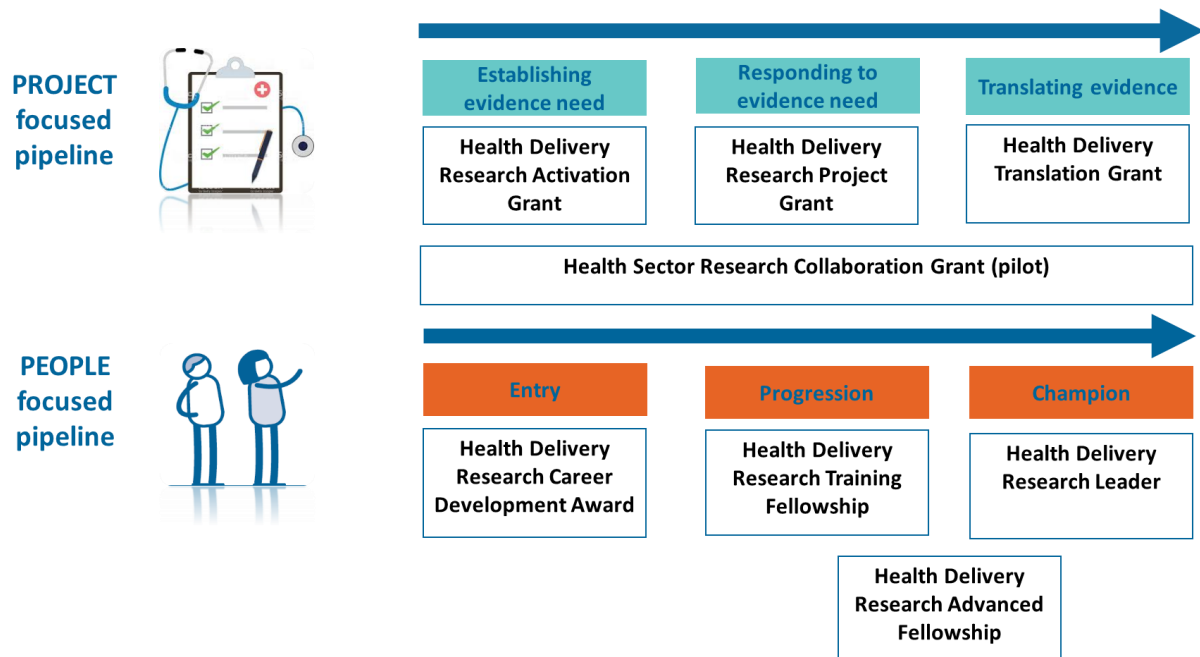
Health delivery research is a critical step for achieving health gains and health system benefits in New Zealand, and the HRC aims to allocate 20% of our annual funding round budget in this important area (about \$17 million a year). A key aim of our redesigned funding opportunities and processes is to better engage health delivery providers in research than we have been able to in the past.

The redesigned health delivery investment structure aims to build on strengths while addressing issues that haven't worked in the past, making use of valuable information shared by stakeholders through consultation processes for the NZHRS and Prioritisation Framework. It aims to enable a broad range of clinical and non-clinical health professionals to engage in health delivery research, increase the number of grant applications we receive and our total investment in health delivery research, and, in particular, grow health services research and health provider participation.

2. What has changed?

The new health delivery research funding opportunities are based on a pipeline approach to enabling and developing both research and researchers. The health delivery research **investment round** replaces the HRC's previous New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream and will now run separately to the HRC's main annual funding round. Within this new health delivery research investment round, we will offer a range of funding opportunities across both the project and people-focused pipelines (see diagram below) to make sure that we are providing support across the whole continuum of health delivery

research, from activation to translation, and from entry-level researchers through to research leaders or ‘champions’.



This new approach is intended to support research and researchers at various starting points in health delivery research.

Our Health Sector Research Collaboration Grant pilot represents a new way of procuring research, in response to feedback from the sector, whereby we are testing a negotiated procurement approach in addition to the HRC’s existing investigator-led opportunities. This approach incentivises health service organisations to plan and engage in health delivery research given their key role in providing health care and identifying evidence needs. The HRC will identify suitable pilot partners and work with them to ensure their research plans deliver health and wellbeing benefits for New Zealanders. This approach is designed to enable these organisations to develop their capacity to undertake research and reinforce the value that research generates within the organisation. It also enables the HRC to purchase research that is directly connected to local population health needs.

The HRC will test this pilot with selected District Health Boards (DHBs) first, with a view to expanding the opportunity to other health providers in the future. Other health providers, including DHBs unsuccessful in the pilot intake, are also encouraged to apply for the other HRC health delivery research funding opportunities.

More information about each of these funding opportunities is provided on [HRC Gateway](#), including advice on how to identify the most suitable opportunity for your starting point in health delivery research and the application and assessment processes for each funding opportunity.

3. What does it mean for established researchers?

The new suite of eight health delivery research funding opportunities provides a suitable opportunity for all levels of research experience. A key focus of this redesign has been to enable excellent, well-established researchers to continue their work and translate research

findings to achieve health and health-system gains, balanced with the need to provide opportunities for new pathways into research at entry-level. Investigator-led opportunities are available, however a key aspect of these is connection to a real-world health delivery need, and therefore collaboration with the health sector.

More information on each funding opportunity and the application requirements are provided on [HRC Gateway](#).

4. What does it mean for health providers?

A key focus of this new approach to HRC investment in health delivery research is enabling greater health sector participation. Health providers are in an optimal position to identify health delivery evidence needs and often to undertake the corresponding research. This is a unique opportunity to make positive change and improve health outcomes.

We understand that there are barriers to health professionals engaging in research, particularly where resources are stretched. As such, we are piloting new ways of working with health providers to engage more health professionals in health delivery research, starting with our Health Sector Research Collaboration Grant pilot with DHBs (see the section ‘What has changed?’ for more information about this pilot).

Additionally, the new opportunities include investment in the people pipeline, offering non-academic pathways to build health delivery research capacity, and support for getting “research ready” in the project pipeline. The Health Delivery Research Career Development Award and the Health Delivery Research Activation Grant use a randomised approach to assessment of eligible proposals to support a wide range of health delivery research, specific to certain New Zealand population needs.

These represent opportunities for applications from both organisations and individuals.

The HRC will be evaluating the success of these new ways of working and we encourage health provider feedback.

More information on each of these funding opportunities and the application requirements are provided on [HRC Gateway](#).

5. What funding opportunities are available and when?

The HRC is introducing the new health delivery research funding opportunities in two phases. The following funding opportunities are available from 12 December 2019 when Phase 1 launches:

- Health Delivery Research Activation Grant
- Health Delivery Research Project Grant
- Health Sector Research Collaboration Grant (Pilot)
- Health Delivery Research Career Development Award.

Funding announcements for this round are expected in August 2020. Phase 2 will follow in quarter four with the remaining new funding opportunities:

- Health Delivery Translation Grant
- Health Delivery Research Training Fellowship
- Health Delivery Research Advanced Fellowship
- Health Delivery Research Leader.

Information about each funding opportunity and key dates are available on HRC Gateway [HRC Gateway](#).

6. How do I apply?

Detailed instructions and timeframes for applying are available on [HRC Gateway](#). We've made some changes to existing HRC assessment processes for these new opportunities in response to sector feedback to simplify and make these opportunities more accessible. As such, for these opportunities we are shifting away from our current two-stage approach to assessment for the Health Delivery Research Project Grant.

The new process for the Health Sector Research Project Grant includes an external peer review of the methodological components of a proposal and a strategic assessment of the potential benefits. This looks at what could be achieved, while also making sure it is achievable. A Health Delivery Research Steering Group will oversee the assessment process to make strategic recommendations, with a whole of portfolio view to balance investment across the health delivery research funding opportunities.