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## **eCDS, Evidence and Transparency: Towards a standards-based approach for eCDS implementations**

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Electronic Clinical Decision Support (eCDS) systems are interactive computer applications which assist physicians and other health professionals with clinical decision making at the point of care; they have the potential to improve the consistency and quality of clinical care.

Evidence-based clinical guidelines are definitive statements of best clinical practice, developed from systematic appraisal of the clinical literature.

eCDS implementations of clinical guidelines are demanding of end-to-end process governance to ensure that the clinical logic of a guideline is faithfully and safely reproduced in the options and recommendations offered to a clinician, in a given clinical context and setting, by a given eCDS tool.

As complex narrative documents, clinical guidelines naturally give rise to a degree of interpretive freedom on the part of guideline users, including eCDS developers, for whom long narrative documents can be very challenging to 'disambiguate' and convert into computer-interpretable rule-sets.

New Zealand Guidelines Group are working with the New Zealand Ministry of Health, clinical leaders and eCDS and Patient Management System vendors to develop a national 'Standard for the Development and Management of Electronic Clinical Decision Support (eCDS) Systems'. The Standard will be used in New Zealand to improve improve the transparency and safety of eCDS implementations. The Standard will:

- a) assist accurate communication between setters of clinical standards such as NZGG and eCDS / PMS vendors
- b) Specify the governance systems, practices and steps which will assure both clinical validity and patient safety in eCDS implementations.
- c) include reference to internationally and nationally endorsed medical terminology sets and coding systems

The context, rationale and some of the likely challenges will be discussed.