

Memorandum

Letter to request improved emergency department security

Date due to MO: 28 November 2023 **Action required by:** 28 November 2023

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Health Report number:** H2023033220

To: Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health

Consulted: Health New Zealand: ☐ Māori Health Authority: ☐

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Simon Medcalf	Deputy Director-General, Regulation and Monitoring Te Pou Whakamaru	s 9(2)(a)
Hayden Luscombe	Acting Group Manager, Regulation and Monitoring Te Pou Whakamaru	s 9(2)(a)

Action for Private Secretaries

N/A

Date dispatched to MO:

Letter to request improved emergency department security

Purpose

1. This memo responds to your request for a letter to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to seek immediate action to improve Emergency Department security.
2. A draft letter is attached to this memo.

Background / context

3. As requested, the letter requires both:
 - i. Immediate action in the highest-risk hospitals, with Health New Zealand providing you with proposals by 7 December 2023 for actions to be delivered this calendar year.
 - ii. A fuller implementation plan to set out improvements in security across the wider number of public hospitals over time, to be provided by end January 2024. This plan would include a clear baseline of current security provision and measures to track improvement over time.
4. We have consulted with Health New Zealand on the draft letter.
5. On-going progress updates on the implementation plan are expected to be included in Health New Zealand regular monthly and quarterly reporting.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** the attached draft letter responds to your request for a letter to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to seek immediate action to improve Emergency Department security
- b) **Agree** to sign the attached letter

Noted

Yes/No



Dr Diana Sarfati
Director-General of Health
Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora
Date: 28/11/2023



Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Health
Date:

30 NOV 2023

Dame Karen Poutasi
Board Chair
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Dear Dame Karen,

Urgent action on emergency department security

As outlined in our 100-day plan, this Government is committed to ensuring that health services are provided in an environment where our staff are safe, and patients and whānau can safely receive care.

I am concerned there has been significant growth in assaults on health workers operating in our public hospitals, notably in emergency departments (EDs). More assaults on our staff were reported in the first three months of this year than in the whole of 2021, and this comes against a backdrop of rising crime.

Our health workforce is our greatest asset, and ensuring their welfare and safety is a priority for this Government. It is imperative that all health staff are supported to provide high quality care in a safe environment, without concern of being assaulted, or having to witness and manage violent situations. Likewise, it is crucial that patients, their families, and the wider community feel safe when they use our hospitals.

Accordingly, I am writing to set my clear expectations with regard to security within EDs.

I expect to see immediate action to address security concerns in the highest-risk EDs by the end of this calendar year. I would like to receive proposals for these immediate steps by 7 December 2023, including which facilities Health New Zealand would propose to prioritise alongside the changes that staff and patients should expect to see.

I also expect to see an implementation plan that sets out how improvements in ED security will be further spread to other hospitals across New Zealand. This plan should specify the range of steps required to strengthen safety and security, including quantifying the number of dedicated additional staff that Health New Zealand will put in place. It should include a baseline of current security provisions in our hospitals, and clear measures to support monitoring of progress on a quarterly basis, in line with your wider reporting procedures. I expect to receive a draft of this plan by end January 2024.

I look forward to receiving your advice, and to seeing action that will reassure our staff and the people who use health services of our commitment to their safety.

I will be writing again soon to outline my wider strategic priorities for health, but I ask that you make urgent progress on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Health

cc Fepulea'i Margie Apa, Chief Executive, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora
Dr Diana Sarfati, Director General of Health

PROACTIVELY RELEASED