



Memorandum

Priority initiatives for public health | Quarterly report

Date due to MO:	N/A	Action required by:	N/A
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE	Health Report number:	H2023020547
To:	Anna Gilles, Lead Private Secretary, Office of Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall		
Consulted:	Health New Zealand: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Dr Andrew Old	Deputy Director-General, Public Health Agency, Manatū Hauora	s 9(2)(a)
Alma Matenga-Wilson	Manager, Office of the Deputy Director General, Public Health Agency, Manatū Hauora	

Action for Private Secretaries

N/A

Date dispatched to MO: 17
February 2023



Priority initiatives for public health | Quarterly report

Purpose

1. This memo provides the third public health quarterly report (attached at *Appendix 1*) for Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall covering the period 1 October to 31 December 2022.

Background

2. The Minister of Health, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, has requested a regular quarterly report on the delivery of public health initiatives.
3. The first quarterly report was delivered in August 2022. Attached at *Appendix 1* is the third iteration of the report.
4. The report draws on the progress of each priority area from the last quarter (October to December 2022) and informs on activities planned for the current quarter (January to March 2023).
5. The quarterly report currently covers the following public health initiatives which sit across the Public Health Agency, Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora: Antimicrobial Resistance, Community Water Fluoridation, Hepatitis C, the HIV Action Plan, Rheumatic Fever, the Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Health Surveillance, and the Smokefree Action Plan.

Next steps

6. The next public health quarterly report will be provided to the office in May 2023, unless requested otherwise.



Dr Andrew Old

Deputy Director-General

Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui



Date: 17 February 2023



Appendix 1 - Priority initiatives for public health | Quarterly report – January 2023

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Priority initiatives for public health | Quarterly report – October to December 2022

Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) <i>(Public Health Agency led but aspects may shift to Te Whatu Ora)</i>	Prepare government response to the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor's (PMCSA) report	December 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued cross-agency collaboration to agree and draft responses to the recommendations. A lead for AMR has been identified within Te Whatu Ora who we are now working with closely, to further progress the PMCSA response. AMR Governance Group met on 11 October and 21 November 2022 to review and support progress. Joint meeting with Ministers (Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Associate Minister of Health, and Hon Meka Whaitiri, Minister for Food Safety) and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) officials was held on 22 November 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming to finalise and provide a draft response to Ministers. 	s 9(2)(g)(i)
	Draft a new AMR Action Plan	30 June 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MPI has recruited a programme manager to support planning and coordination of this work. Developed a draft work programme identifying steps and timelines for drafting the new AMR Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a cross-Ministry National Action Plan working group for the new AMR Action Plan. Identify actions from the current AMR Action Plan and the PMCSA that should be pulled over and included in the new Action Plan. 	
Community Water Fluoridation <i>(Public Health Agency led)</i>	Implement Director-General of Health decision-making on community water fluoridation of drinking-water supplies	December 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 14 local authorities who were issued direction to fluoridate drinking water in July 2022 have now submitted, or plan to submit, an application for Manatū Hauora funding, for the capital costs of fluoridation. In November 2022, the Director-General of Health advised a second set of 27 local authorities that they are being actively considered for a potential direction to fluoridate. The Director-General of Health has also advised a further 26 local authorities that they are likely to hear in the second quarter of 2023 about being actively considered for a potential direction to fluoridate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an analysis of the responses from the 27 local authorities under active consideration, to form recommendations for the Director-General of Health on issuing directions to fluoridate. Work with Taumata Arawai to agree a mechanism to collect fluoride dose information from drinking water suppliers. Develop a compliance approach to inform Manatū Hauora decision-making for working with local authorities that supply fluoridated drinking water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.

Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
Hepatitis C <i>(Te Whatu Ora led)</i> Further information can be found at Appendix 1.a.	Implementation of the awareness television/media campaign	March 2022	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measured campaign success against agreed criteria with final evaluation reports showing overall positive measures of success. Success of Te Whatu Ora challenge to Advertising Standards Authority decision, December 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Ensure endurance of social media, digital toolbox and collateral	December 2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive results have been received on the collateral placement and co-branding. This work has a focus on partners working with priority populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of long-term strategic communications planning to ensure longevity of campaign collateral. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Development of system architecture and user experience for a Hepatitis C National registry and surveillance tool (coordination system)	March 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot for national Hepatitis C pharmaceutical and treatments data reporting dashboard complete and ready for review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of conceptual system architecture. Review Registry and Surveillance System data for inclusion in the Maviret Dispensing Tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Development of Hepatitis C Point of Care testing (POCT) micro credentials	March 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hepatitis C POCT credentialling developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise pilot/proof of concept testing for POCT credentialling. Consultation on expanding credential development to include pharmacy, nursing, and community-based stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Support the Northern region Seroprevalence study	February 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern region seroprevalence study (n=195) completed, with study findings due by late February 2023. The Hepatitis C epidemiology team, working with Dr Homie Razavi, Centre for Disease Analysis USA, used newly developed seroprevalence models and templates to review national population estimates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm validity of updated population estimates from new modelling. Plan regional seroprevalence studies based on 2022 Northern Region studies to understand our national seroprevalence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Marivet Reclassification	March 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission for Maviret reclassification for nurse prescribing accepted by Medsafe on 16 October 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission to include pharmacist supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If reclassification is not approved, this limits accessibility to medicines, with alternatives to be put in place.

Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
HIV Action Plan <i>(Public Health Agency led)</i> The HIV costed implementation plan can be found at Appendix 1.b.	Launch HIV Action Plan	March 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The drawdown of Budget 22 funding was approved by Minister Little and Minister Robertson 19 December 2022. We have reprioritised Budget 22 funding based on your feedback to have a stronger focus on testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the HIV Action Plan at the Big Gay Out 12 March 2023. The Prime Minister will launch the plan as part of the political panel. Initiate procurement for 22/23 spend (\$2m) for the HIV Action Plan. This includes expanded surveillance, initial audit of antenatal screening, development of updated pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) clinical guidelines, expanding prevention for migrant communities and uplifting for peer-based organisations. Share HIV Action Plan consultation summary report with those who participated in consultation. Publish the HIV Action Plan and Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infection (STBBI) on or before 12 March on the Ministry of Health website. Establishing a Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infection (STBBI) programme team to deliver the HIV Action Plan and continue to implement the Hepatitis C Action Plans and other STBBI priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s 9(2)(g)(i)
Rheumatic fever (RF) <i>(Te Whatu Ora led)</i>	Develop a national Rheumatic fever care coordination system (register)	March 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved requirements and minimum viable delivery product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start detailed planning for register/system delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Develop a Group A Streptococcus (GAS) vaccine	November 2025		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with building laboratory testing, infrastructure and other key activities across the workstreams. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Insights and guidelines update	Insights: December 2023 Guidelines: Published with resources by March 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights: Project and advisory teams confirmed. Project plan complete. Guidelines: Recruited project manager and clinical writer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights: Submit ethics and data access applications. Engage key stakeholders. Develop geographical visualisation of COVID-19 outbreaks, public health measures compared to RF cases. Guidelines: Organise and hold a series of stakeholder workshops to discuss content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights: Further delays would impact on this work given the time sensitive nature of some of the factors to be tested.
Data update	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 calendar year data on RF was published on the Te Whatu Ora website (October 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipating 2022 calendar year data to be available in March 2023 and published shortly thereafter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report. 	

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Rheumatic fever (RF) <i>(Te Whatu Ora led)</i>	Budget 2019 – co-design and short-term initiatives	June 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design reports published on the Te Whatu Ora website (October). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to embed prototypes and continue evaluation activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Develop a national RF roadmap	March 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated sector feedback on the roadmap (October) and final draft shared with external writers/reviewers and critical friends for final commentary (December 2022- January 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise roadmap. Plan for launch event (May 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Additional activities that support and align with the roadmap	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding approved for four additional RF initiatives (that support actions in roadmap). These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a demonstration pilot for echocardiographic case finding for undetected rheumatic heart disease the continuation and extension of an enhanced nursing prototype, delivering a different model of care for young people with RF/RH disease in Counties Manukau a scoping project/pilot to improve dental access for those with rheumatic heart disease over 18 years of age the continuation and extension of awareness raising activities with Pacific communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete review of echocardiographic case finding and screening against the New Zealand Health Screening Criteria. Commence the national awareness raising with activities focusing on high incidence areas. Commence nursing pilot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) <i>(Public Health Agency led)</i>	Establishment and work programme	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The members of the Committee were officially announced on 2 December 2022. The Committee had its first introductory meeting on 12 December 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PHAC met for its inaugural meeting on 27 January 2023. The focus of the meeting was its 2023 work programme. Minister Verrall met with the PHAC and discussed her priorities for the Committee. PHAC to agree its work programme with Minister Verrall and begin work on first major topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing public expectations about the PHACs main focus topic. Ensuring public, stakeholders and interested parties are engaged and brought along as work unfolds.

Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
Public health surveillance <i>(Public Health Agency led)</i>	National public health surveillance strategy	March 2023 (TBC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered leadership roles in the public health knowledge and surveillance system (PHKSS) and as part of this, considered the positioning of the surveillance strategy in the new structure. Pivot and confirm COVID-19 infection and seroprevalence surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out a roadmap for surveillance strategy development as part of the PHKSS framework. Initiate development of national public health surveillance strategy (last updated December 2021). Priorities for this strategy will reflect community and expert feedback as part of Pae Ora Strategies. Continue implementation of the COVID-19 surveillance in Aotearoa New Zealand plan, which will be revised as the situation changes. Update post arrival testing and border surveillance approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint agency capacity is limited.
	Disease intelligence and international surveillance	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International scanning of COVID-19 infections. Continued reporting on domestic COVID-19 trends. International intelligence gathering of other ongoing, emerging, or potential risks. Completed reactive reporting during response to mpox including report looking at international trends and emerging evidence which was used to support readiness actions and clinical guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued intelligence and international surveillance of diseases of concern and continued collaboration with international surveillance systems (eg, the World Health Organisation and Communicable Diseases Network Australia), supported by colleagues at the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR). The Public Health Agency has developed a live dashboard to provide regular updates on COVID-19 trends. Scoping a report on the Enhanced Border Solution. First iteration was released 27 January 2023. Continuing to scope and implement reporting on equity measures in the COVID-19 trends and insights report (including disability, L2 ethnicity, deprivation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Communicable disease surveillance	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established wastewater testing capability for COVID-19 quantification, detection of new variants, and initial steps for new pathogens. Completed prototype for digital tools to use for COVID-19 infection and immunity survey. Nearing completion of procurement for laboratory suppliers. Implemented wastewater testing for mpox and development of wastewater testing for polio. Continuing development of a public health surveillance directory to provide oversight of all public health activities in New Zealand. This can be used to support decision makers, inform the PHKSS, and will be published on Ministry of Health website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalising a report to Ministers listed on the future use of wastewater testing technology and infrastructure for other infectious disease surveillance – late November 2022. Collaborating with the National Public Health Service regarding leadership in ongoing, operational surveillance. Supporting Te Whatu Ora to develop a Hepatitis C register. Continuing to enhance respiratory surveillance systems. Supporting response and preparedness actions to emerging threats including supporting the update of the polio response plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential lack of engagement by public in active COVID-19 surveillance. Need for cross-agency agreement to use core digital tools. <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">s 9(2)(g)(i)</div>

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Public health surveillance <i>(Public Health Agency led)</i>	Non-communicable disease surveillance	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping of national nutrition survey continues pending funding. Work (by Provider) on building the nutrition survey tools continues on track. Joint presentation on the survey development at the Nutrition Society conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s 9(2)(g)(i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s 9(2)(g)(i)
Smokefree Action Plan	Overall implementation of the Smokefree Action Plan actions	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 of the 28 action plan actions are in place or on track; the following two are behind schedule with mitigations in place. The Department of Corrections has completed a draft policy review of nicotine replacement therapy in prisons however the report is still going through internal sign off and has been delayed due to staffing pressures across most sites. Mitigations and future work includes strengthening the linkages between Probation Services, Alcohol and Drug Services and local stop smoking providers to support those being released from prison (action 3.8). A review of the current capacity and capability of the Smokefree Enforcement Offices workforce is underway and will inform future compliance and enforcement roles. This action is behind schedule due to a lack of resources to progress this work. Mitigations include actively seeking to recruit and working with the National Public Health Service to finalise documentation of compliance roles and responsibilities (action 6.2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter three report on progress implementing the action plan actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Introduce Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill <i>(Led by the Public Health Agency)</i>	Dec 2022	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Smokefree Bill received Royal assent on 16 December 2022 and became the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Act 2022 (the Smokefree Act) on 1 January 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.

Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
Smokefree Action Plan	New action Smokefree regulations made <i>(Led by the Public Health Agency)</i>	July 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to implement changes in the Smokefree Act, a regulatory regime must be established to oversee and monitor the import, manufacture, sale and supply of smoked tobacco products in New Zealand. On 19 December 2022, Cabinet approved the release of the consultation document setting out proposals for the regulatory regime. Online consultation commenced 4 January and will be concluded 15 March 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on proposals to establish Smokefree regulatory scheme, including consultation with iwi Māori (January – March 2023). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Establish the Interim Tobacco Regulatory Authority <i>(Led by the Public Health Agency)</i>	June 2022	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Interim Tobacco Regulatory Authority was established in July 2022 to administer the new tobacco regulatory scheme under the Smokefree Act which is preparing to commence in 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.
	Fund health promotion and community mobilisation activities that support the Smokefree goal <i>(Led by Te Whatu Ora)</i>	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect your Breath, a social media campaign to reduce youth vaping, was launched on 15 November 2022. The campaign was co-designed with the Hā Collective, a group of Māori and Pacific youth, supported by Curative, a social change agency. A Quitstrong campaign delivered by the National Public Health Service ran from December 2022 until the end of January 2023. A preferred concept for the new Quit campaign was confirmed by the Programme Steering Group in December following the outcome of audience testing. The quit campaign provider is in production ahead of the launch of the campaign in February 2023. Hāpai Te Hauora is contracted to lead local, regional and national community activation activities. Additional funding has been allocated to increase community mobilisation and recruit an activator for the Wellington region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch new Quit campaign in February 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.

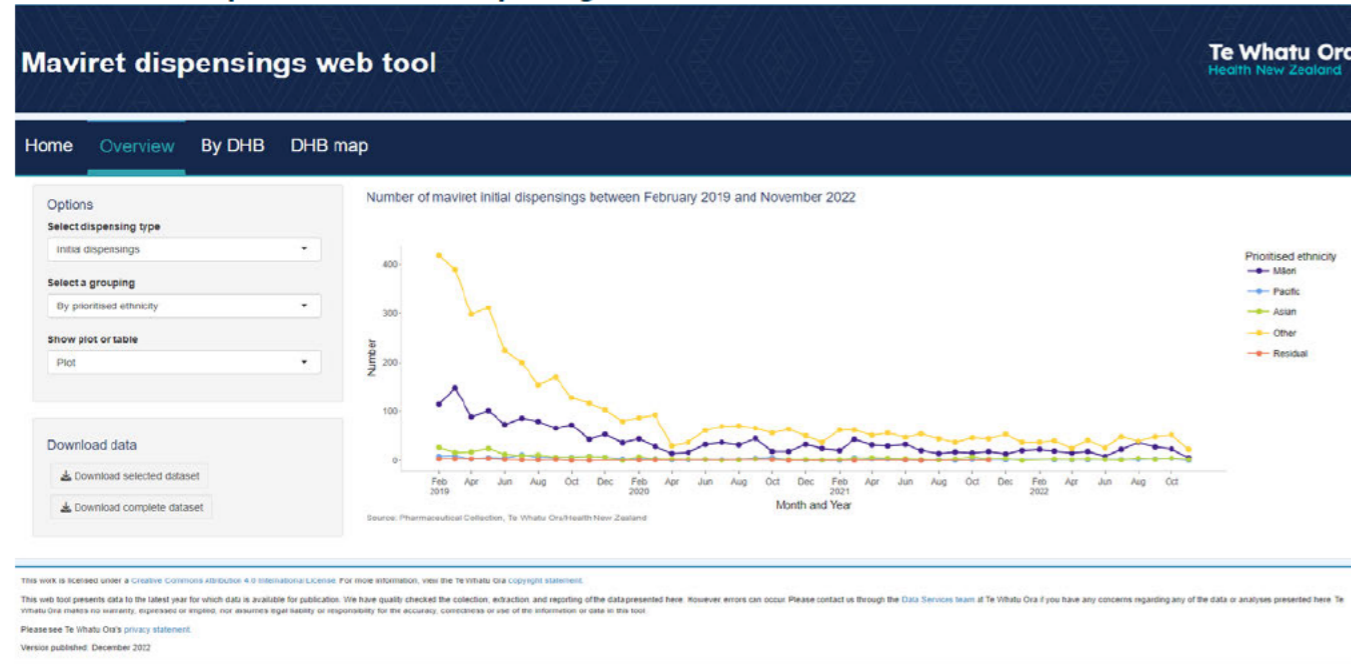
Priority area	Actions	Completion date	RAG Rating	Progress last quarter (October to December 2022)	Activities planned for current quarter (January to March 2023)	Risks
Smokefree Action Plan	Increase evidence-based stop smoking services <i>(Led by Te Whatu Ora)</i>	Dec 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on the first phase of the Stop Smoking Investment Plan has been completed to scale up an existing proven stop smoking initiative. All 16 current stop smoking providers have commenced delivery of their scaled-up proposals primarily based on increasing Māori smokefree practitioners and increasing services to hapu wāhine and Māori. Implementation has commenced on a co-commissioning approach with Te Aka Whai Ora for phase two of the investment plan to distribute stop smoking innovation funding. Services are expected to be contracted by June 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-commission phase two of the stop smoking investment plan innovation funding with Te Aka Whai Ora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant risks to report.

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Appendix 1.a: Update on Hepatitis C in Aotearoa

Te Whatu Ora National Collections Team have completed a **Maviret Dispensings Web Tool** pilot (see screenshot below), this will be available as a public facing reporting tool by 31 March 2023. This tool will eventually include data from the Registry & Surveillance System such as POCT results.

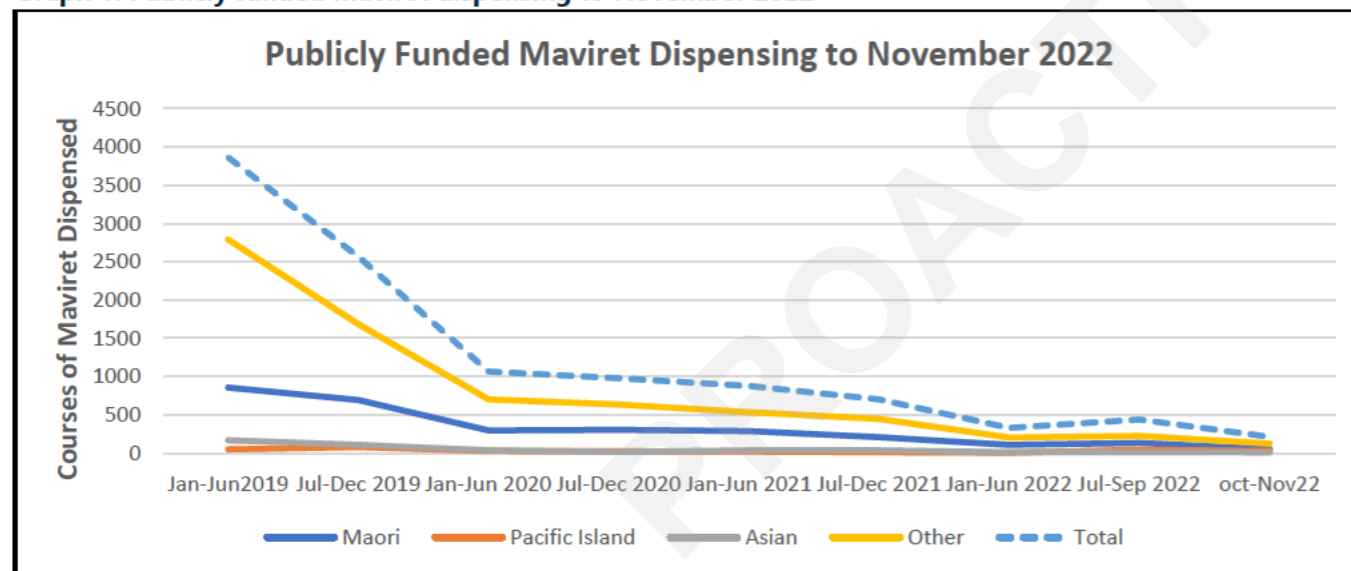
Screenshot example of the Maviret Dispensings Web Tool



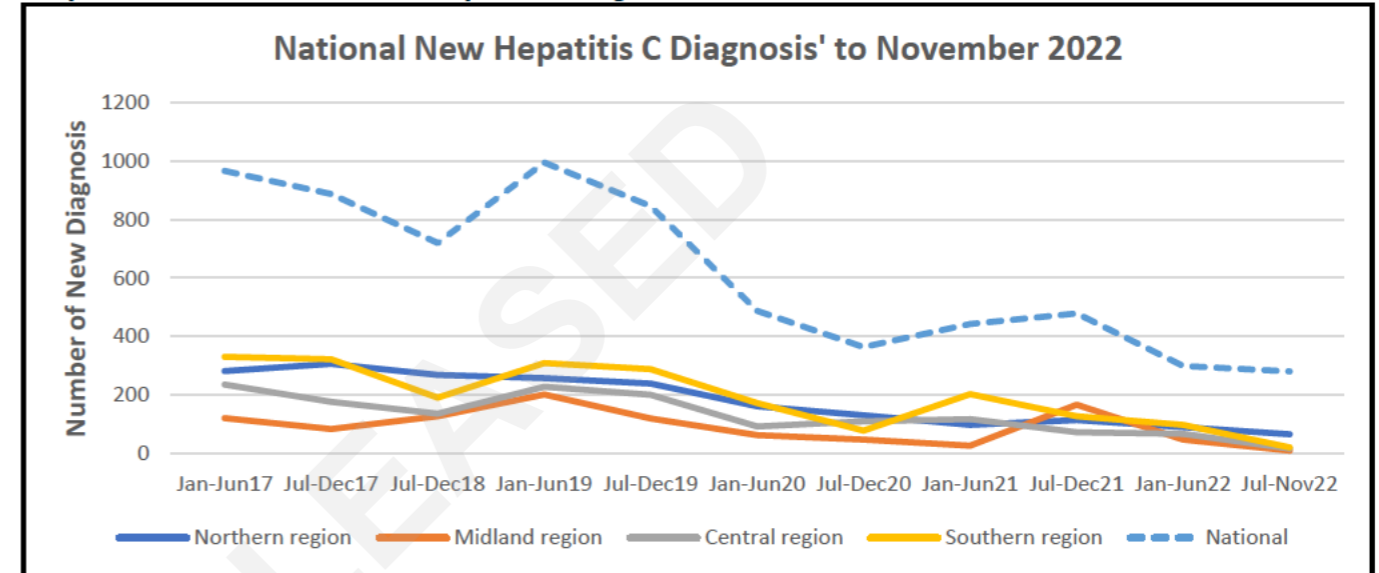
Long term data trends reflect the capture of known Hep C cases with availability of Maviret from February 2019, to the current screening and testing emphasis on priority population i.e., people who inject drugs. This quarter has seen a continued downturn in Maviret dispensing (**Graph 1**) and new diagnosis (**Graph 2**), potentially due to time of year and expected saturation of testing and screening in our prevalent populations.

Graph 3 shows an upturn in POCT rates. These upturns could be a result of the **“Stick it to Hep C”** campaign.

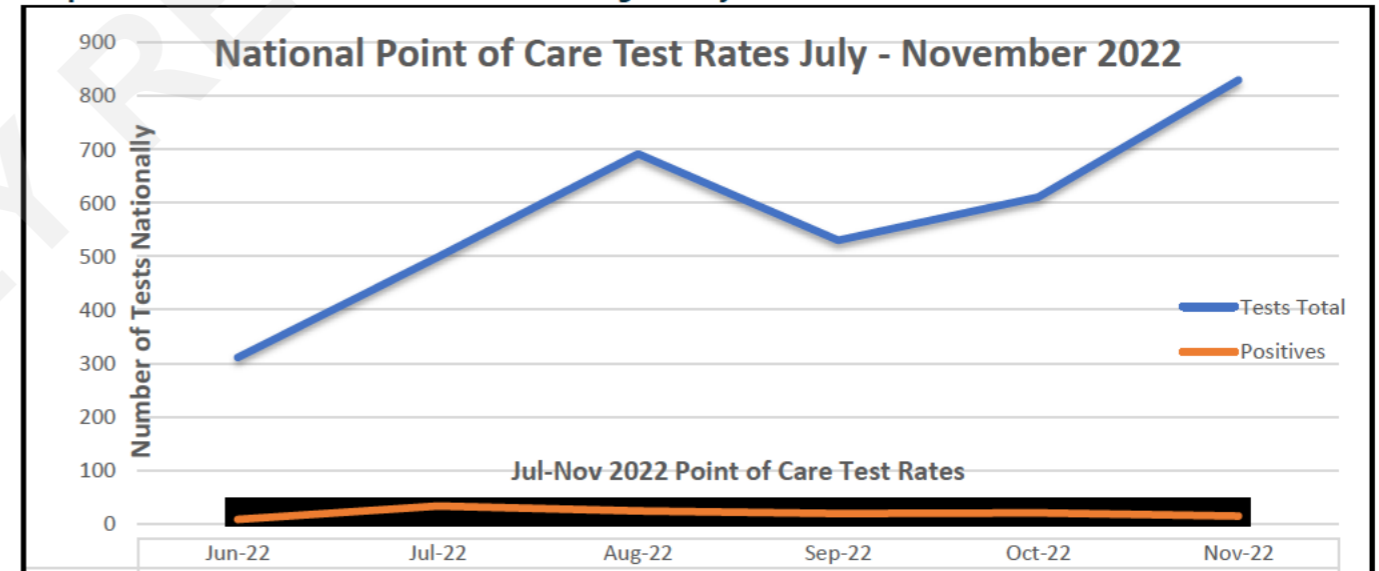
Graph 1: Publicly funded Maviret dispensing to November 2022*



Graph 2: Aotearoa national new Hepatitis C diagnosis, to November 2022*



Graph 3: Aotearoa national Point of Care Testing Q1 July to November 2022**



Graph 3 above shows continued increase in POCT for Q2 2022/23. This data is currently manually compiled from various regional data streams. This data will be incorporated into the **Maviret Dispensings Web Tool** once the **Registry and Surveillance System** is completed to allow digital capture of this POCT data.

The development of the **National Registry and Surveillance System**, scheduled for pilot release March 2023, will greatly enhance the availability of POCT testing across the community via non-regulated workforce kaiawhina and peers.

* **Graphs 1 and 2** are based on Te Whatu Ora national collections pharmaceutical data to end of November 2022.

** **Graph 3** is based on regional manual data collation; this will be replaced with Registry & Surveillance tool data sets once the system is available

Appendix 1.b: HIV costed implementation plan: 2022-2026

HIV costed implementation plan: 2022 – 2026

For the National HIV Action Plan for Aotearoa New Zealand 2023–2030

To eliminate local HIV transmission and ensure people living with HIV have healthy lives free from stigma and discrimination

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

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