



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Establishing Strategic Priorities for Immediate COVID-19 Vaccination and Governance for the Immunisation System

Portfolio Health / COVID-19 Response

On 23 November 2022, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the National Immunisation Programme within the new health system will require clear strategic priorities and outcomes for the COVID-19 immunisation programme over the next six to twelve months;
- 2 **agreed** that through to June 2023, the National Immunisation Programme will focus on:
 - 2.1 protecting those most at risk of the impacts of COVID-19;
 - 2.2 immunisation gaps in existing eligible population groups;
- 3 **noted** that there is sufficient COVID-19 vaccine supply at this stage to support priorities and continue to provide broad population protection against COVID-19 in 2022 and early 2023;
- 4 **noted** that to manage uncertainty and risks with COVID-19, and potential changes in vaccine technology that may better support the National Immunisation Programme, officials will:
 - 4.1 utilise existing Advance Purchase Agreements, providing a route for additional volumes of vaccines for 2023 and outyears or early access to updated variant vaccines or as eligibility is extended for younger age groups;
 - 4.2 continue to horizon scan and utilise the most up-to-date science and technical advice on COVID-19 risks and vaccine technologies that might award us better protection, reduce transmission or better match our population needs;
 - 4.3 consider additional advance purchase arrangements or other purchase mechanisms that will ensure timely access and sufficient supply;
- 5 **noted** that the National Immunisation Programme must focus on improving uptake in priority population groups to ensure high levels of population protection are maintained and improved;

- 6 **agreed** to the governance mechanism for the Immunisation System that will establish:
- 6.1 an Immunisation Oversight Board that includes membership from the Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora|Health New Zealand, Te Aka Whai Ora|the Māori Health Authority, Whaikaha|the Ministry of Disabled People, Pharmac, the Public Health Agency and Medsafe;
 - 6.2 a subcommittee of the Governance Board (membership from Pharmac, Te Aka Whai Ora, Te Whatu Ora) focused on vaccine supply and distribution which will support Pharmac in its new purchasing and management role;
 - 6.3 an Immunisation Outcomes Collective, the steering group that will direct the National Immunisation Programme activities and manage programme implementation;
 - 6.4 an Immunisation Technical Advisory Group that will provide cohesive and robust advice across all aspects of immunisation and ensure that the programme is able to respond to the latest science and technical information;
- 7 **agreed** that the above governance mechanism will need to evolve as the system embeds its operating model and to prioritise work that embeds and reflects partnership with Māori and enable greater collaboration, co-design and shared ownership across communities;
- 8 **authorised** the Minister of Finance, Minister of Health and Minister for COVID-19 Response manage all future COVID-19 vaccine purchasing decisions;
- 9 **authorised** the Minister of Finance, Minister of Health and Minister for COVID-19 Response to jointly draw down funding from the 'Minimising the Health Impacts of COVID-19 - Tagged Operating Contingency' as required to support COVID-19 immunisation objectives;
- 10 **authorised** the Minister of Health and Minister for COVID-19 Response to manage all wider COVID-19 vaccine portfolio considerations, including decisions to use and management of the portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines;
- 11 **endorsed** developing the National Immunisation Strategy over the next 12 months with a clear strategy and action plan within the context of a reformed health system and in partnership with Māori.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)
Hon Andrew Little
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon Jan Tinetti
Hon Dr David Clark
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan
Hon Meka Whaitiri

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Office of the Chair
Officials Committee for SWC