

## **Chief Nursing Officer update to Nurses across Aotearoa March 2021**

Tēnā koutou katoa,

This year has started with a reminder that we must continue to focus on the COVID-19 elimination strategy following the community cases in Auckland. A huge effort from all involved including the local community resulted in a relatively small number of cases. I want to acknowledge nurses involved in testing and contact tracing as well as those involved in our border and isolation/quarantine team.

The immunisation programme has started with lots of work by nurse leaders involved in the planning and preparation regionally of this programme of work and those involved in the initial teams. Further updates can be found here <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-updates-health-sector>. More information on the surge workforce and training is included below.

### **Welcome to our new Chief Nursing Officer Lorraine Hetaraka**

Lorraine Hetaraka (Tapuika, Ngāti Pīkiao, Ngāiterangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Kahu) will be joining us on 15 March.

Lorraine joins us with a strong clinical and academic background in nursing leadership. She started her career as a registered nurse and then progressed into roles as a Nursing Leader and Nursing Director accountable for strategy, workforce planning, policy and primary healthcare delivery. This included working for the National Hauora Coalition, ProCare Health and Homecare Medical. She was also joint Associate Director of Nursing: Māori at Auckland District Health Board and the University of Auckland for four years.

Lorraine has been the Chief Executive of Te Arawa Whānau Ora for the last year and has made a significant contribution to Māori and other high needs populations wellbeing, in the communities this organisation supports. In this role Lorraine showed outstanding leadership and the ability to build collaborative relationships and networks in the health and social sector to influence positive change for the Te Arawa people. Lorraine's loss will be felt by her team at Te Arawa Whānau Ora and it will be a privilege to have her join us.

### **Other changes at the Chief Nurses Office**

Kathy Glasgow has left the Ministry to pursue other interests. Kathy was in the Chief Nursing Office for five years and most recently as a Principal Advisor where she contributed her expertise to many areas but particularly the Health of Older Persons. We wish Kathy all the best with her next adventure.

Jane Pryer, Principal Advisor Infection Prevention and Control has been assisting us since last March and has now been permanently appointed into her role. Jane will continue to provide advice during the pandemic and assist with the development of a National Infection Prevention and Control Strategy.

### **Health and Disability Review Transition Unit**

The Government has been considering the Health and Disability System Review / Hauora Manaaki Ki Aotearoa Whānui (the Review) recommendations and started planning the next steps. As part of this process, a Health and Disability Review Transition Unit (Transition Unit) was established within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) to lead this

work and provide updates on progress. No decisions have been made yet. Cabinet will consider any recommendations made by the Transition Unit in March and an announcement is expected in April 2021.

More information about the [Transition Unit](#) can be found on DPMC's website and if you would like to be kept informed about the Transition Unit's work, you can email [enquiries.tu@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries.tu@dpmc.govt.nz) with the subject line "Opt-in to Transition Unit updates".

## **End of Life Choice Act**

At the 2020 General Election, New Zealanders had the opportunity to vote in a referendum on whether the [End of Life Choice Act 2019 \(the Act\)](#) should come into force. A majority of voters supported the Act.

The Act gives people who experience unbearable suffering from a terminal illness the option of legally asking for medical assistance to end their lives. However, assisted dying remains illegal until the Act comes into force on 7 November 2021.

The Act outlines the legal framework for assisted dying and, includes controls to ensure anyone who seeks assistance to end their life is making an informed decision of their own accord.

Health practitioners are not required to help a person with assisted dying if they have an objection based on their personal beliefs.

The Ministry of Health will be responsible for the Act and has developed a work programme to implement it. This will include developing policy and preparing guidance for health providers.

More information can be found on the Ministry website. This information will be regularly updated over the coming months <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/end-life-choice-act>

## **Update on Safe Staffing Accord initiatives**

It is more than two and a half years since the Safe Staffing Accord (The Accord) was signed by the Minister of Health, the DHBs and NZNO signalling a partnership approach to nursing workforce development. Here is a summary of achievements:

- New funding from Budget 19 enabled all new graduate registered nurses who apply through the Advance Choice of Employment (ACE) process to enter into either a Nurse Entry to Practice (NEtP) or Nurse Entry to Specialty Practice (NESP) (mental health and addictions) programme in their first year of practice (an additional 480 places on NEtP and an additional 77 NESP places)
- Each DHB received funding for an additional FTE for a nurse coach or nurse educator to support the increased volumes of new graduates
- A new funded national Enrolled Nurse Support into Practice Programme (ENSIPP) has been established and opened for applications in July 2020
- Data analysis has been strengthened so that numbers of new graduate registered and enrolled nurses who apply through ACE can be tracked
- The Accord parties worked together to raise the profile of nursing as part of the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and Midwife
- Work is underway to scope an initiative to support for New Zealand registered nurses not currently practising to regain their annual practising certificate through a return to nursing competency assessment programme.

## **CCDM**

The Office continues to work closely with the Safe Staffing Healthy Workplaces Unit (SSHW), SSHW Governance Group and Ministry colleagues on CCDM implementation. This includes tracking progress through DHB reporting to the Ministry in the Annual Planning process and providing regular advice to the Minister of Health and Director-General.

## **Nurse Practitioner and Enrolled Nurse – Service Establishment Programme (Supported Placements)**

The Enrolled Nurse (EN) and Nurse Practitioner (NP) Service Establishment Programme is part of a wider Ministry of Health funded programme to deliver a national Nurse Practitioner Training Programme (NPTP) and to support the establishment of both NPs and ENs in primary health care and community settings, where they deliver (substantively) mental health and addiction services. The Programme is funded through to December 2024.

The Programme is being led by the School of Nursing, University of Auckland in partnership with Mahitahi Hauora PHE; The Fono; Victoria University of Wellington; and the University of Otago. Other key partners are Te Rau Ora; Te Ao Māramatanga; NPNZ (Nurse Practitioners New Zealand); and the Enrolled Nurse Section (NZNO).

The programme aims to improve access to mental health and addiction (MH&A) services in primary health care and community settings by supporting ENs (and NPs) into positions with local health providers. Equity and achieving equitable outcomes, underpins the Programme. Funding will target Māori, and Pacific workforce; and priority health care groups and communities.

The Ministry will be involved in the ongoing governance of the programme.

For further information, contact Dr Sue Adams [s.adams@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:s.adams@auckland.ac.nz).

## **National nursing strategy**

Consultation on a national nursing strategy has begun through several of the lead nursing groups. The online survey for the wider sector consultation and feedback is close to completion and notification will be sent out as soon as this is ready to go live.

## **Free fees for Enrolled Nurse programmes**

The Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF; also known as free trades training) includes enrolled nursing training programmes. The TTAF will support learners to undertake vocational education and training without fees. The TTAF will cover fees from 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2022 and will be paid directly to tertiary education organisations (TEOs). This will enable TEOs to provide education and training without fees to learners.

Please follow the link to the Tertiary Education Commission information regarding fees free (for apprenticeship and other sub-degree programmes): <https://tec.govt.nz/news-and-consultations/more-study-areas-included-in-free-vocational-education/>

## **Medicines list for registered nurse prescribing in primary and specialty teams**

Submissions on the proposed amendments to the specified prescription medicines list for designated registered nurse prescribers in primary health and specialty teams closed on 27 January 2021. A total of 90 submissions were received from individuals and professional organisations in nursing, medicine and optometry. Analysis of the submissions is underway

and will be sent to the Nursing Council for confirmation of the final list. Following approval by the Director-General of Health, the legal change to the list will be made by Gazette notice.

### **COVID-19 vaccine and immunisation programme – surge workforce**

As part of the Ministry's COVID-19 immunisation programme, we're planning for an extra 2,000 to 3,000 full-time (or equivalent) vaccinators to be trained and available throughout New Zealand.

We're currently seeking additional vaccinators to support the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We are asking the primary care sector for assistance – if you know of any retired health professionals or others not currently in the health workforce who may want to be involved, please encourage them to register their interest via the [COVID-19 Surge Workforce database](#).

Please note that this database is only for people **not currently** in the health workforce and willing to be involved in the rollout. For more information, see the [Ministry's website](#).

### **COVID-19 vaccine and immunisation programme - training**

The Immunisation Advisory Centre is providing training on the COVID-19 vaccines. Training is available and underway online, and soon will be face-to-face across the country. Currently the only vaccinators receiving COVID-19 vaccination training are those involved in the initial rollout of the vaccine to border and MIQ workers and vaccinators.

Training for all other vaccinators, including those within general practice and the pharmacy sector, will occur from April 2021 and you will be notified about this in more detail in due course. Vaccination course training costs are fully funded by the Ministry and will be free to the vaccinator.

Please consider how you can contribute to this national vaccination programme and encourage your peers and colleagues to do the same. Enrolled Nurses may be included in the vaccinator workforce.

### **Changes to the Arms Act and implications for health practitioners**

The Arms Legislation Act 2020 introduced changes to the Arms Act 1983 which come into effect from 24 December 2020. The changes aim to reduce harm from firearms.

1. Health practitioners must consider notifying Police of health concerns related to their patient's firearms access,
2. Police will notify health practitioners when their patient has been issued with a firearms licence.

Note that in this legislation 'Health practitioner' means a health practitioner registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand, a nurse practitioner registered with the Nursing Council of New Zealand, a psychologist registered with the New Zealand Psychologists Board, or a duly authorised officer under the [Mental Health \(Compulsory Assessment and Treatment\) Act 1992](#).

Police have developed information for health practitioners. The Ministry of Health gave advice into the process.

For more information please see:

- <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/new-firearms-laws-and-what-they-mean/24-december-2020/health-practitioners>

- [https://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/NCNZ/News-section/news-item/2020/12/Changes to Arms Act and their meaning for Health Practitioners.aspx](https://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/NCNZ/News-section/news-item/2020/12/Changes%20to%20Arms%20Act%20and%20their%20meaning%20for%20Health%20Practitioners.aspx)

### **National measles Immunisation Campaign for 15-30-year olds**

Please get behind the 'Guardians of the Future' campaign to improve measles immunity in 15-30-year olds, particularly among Māori and Pacific peoples. Measles is only a plane-ride away but with border restrictions in place, we have a good opportunity to prevent future outbreaks by acting fast and immunising now. Many people born in the late 1990s and early 2000s are at increased risk of catching and spreading measles because they missed their vaccination as children. This can be a hard group to reach and knowledge about measles and the harm it can cause is very low.

DHBs are leading campaigns in their region to offer immunisations in places where people work, live, learn and play. It's going to take a collective effort to reach these teenagers and young adults so don't let an opportunity to protect against measles go by.

If someone's not sure if they've been immunised, it's okay to have it again. Download the campaign material to share on your networks and display in your clinic via this link:

<https://www.hpa.org.nz/campaign/guardians-of-the-future>

- Website: [ProtectAgainstMeasles.org.nz](https://ProtectAgainstMeasles.org.nz)
- Questions? Email: [measles.campaign@health.govt.nz](mailto:measles.campaign@health.govt.nz)



### **New eLearning programme for primary care nurses launched**

The Heart Foundation is launching a new free, accessible and high-quality eLearning programme for nurses working in primary care. Online courses provide easy access to cardiovascular learning for New Zealand nurses, and communities, to reinforce heart health knowledge.

The new programme offers flexible eLearning for primary care nurses to assist with professional development and the renewal of Annual Practising Certificates. Each course can be applied in day-to-day practise and contribute towards professional development hours.

More information can be found at: <https://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/professionals/health-professionals/elearning-nurses>

### **Vaping regulations consultation is open**

Submissions close 5.00pm, Monday 15 March 2021. The final regulations will be notified in due course and it is expected they will take effect in August 2021, with anonymised submissions published on the Ministry of Health website. Please have your say at:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/smokefree-environments-and-regulated-products-act-1990-proposals-regulations>