

District Health Board Chief Executives
PHO Chief Executives

Kia ora koutou katoa

Reminder about New Zealand's international obligations regarding tobacco control and the need to avoid potential influence from tobacco companies

The Government is committed to reaching a Smokefree Aotearoa by 2025.

I am writing to remind you of New Zealand's international obligations under the WHO's *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)* – this is an international treaty that aims to coordinate efforts to address the substantial global harm related to tobacco use. I would like to bring specific attention to Article 5.3 of the Treaty, which requires Parties to avoid undue influence from the tobacco industry.

Philip Morris International (PMI), a major manufacturer and distributor of tobacco products in New Zealand and internationally, has approached district health boards and other organisations to discuss its new smokeless tobacco products that it is actively marketing in New Zealand. Given our international obligations under the FCTC, I strongly advise you not to engage with representatives from PMI or other representatives from the tobacco industry – the health sector does not share the same goals or aspirations of this industry.

PMI also funds *The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World*. The Foundation in turn provides funding to a range of groups including the NZ Centre for Research Excellence led by Dr Marewa Glover. Given that PMI remains a key stakeholder in the manufacture and distribution of tobacco products in New Zealand and globally, I discourage you from engaging with the Foundation, the Centre or any of its representatives on tobacco control matters, including smoking cessation, while the Centre remains in receipt of funding from *The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World*. Dr Glover is a long-standing contributor to tobacco control on Aotearoa and in particular a strong advocate for achieving better outcomes for Māori. However, there is a range of alternative sources of information and advice on smoking cessation and the possible use of vaping products to support cessation, including for Māori.

I would appreciate it if your organisation can continue to keep the Ministry of Health informed of any approaches made by industry to you by contacting Jane Chambers, Manager Tobacco Control, at jane.chambers@health.govt.nz or on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

Dr Ashley Bloomfield
Director-General of Health