

## Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 03 April 2020



**In this issue:** Medical workers from Canterbury redeployed to fill gaps in Greymouth • GPs cry for help over mass transition to virtual consulting • Personal Protective Equipment information - ACC much more...



Angel Flight NZ is a charity funded by Rotary, Private and Corporate donations.



New Zealand Office Supplies is the preferred supplier to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network. Take advantage of Network practice member benefits with New Zealand Office Supplies.



The Network's health promotion partner.

### New Zealand Rural General Practice Network – Standing ready to support your staffing needs during the Covid-19 emergency

The current COVID-19 outbreak is impacting New Zealand's health system at all levels and has very quickly changed the way we are doing things on a day to day basis. Feedback from rural practices after the first week of the national Level 4 lockdown, tells us that the impact on rural communities is probably different to what's happening in the rest of New Zealand. This is especially the case in many of our rural towns that are dependant on relatively small teams of medical, nursing and practice management staff.

[Read more.](#)

### Urban doctors, nurses to boost struggling rural practices

The New Zealand Rural General Practice Network is very concerned that the COVID-19 outbreak will have a serious impact on rural New Zealanders ability to get the medical care they need compared to people who live in urban centres. They are working closely with rural healthcare practices to make sure they have the staff and resources they need to care for their patients. NZRGPN Chief Executive, Dalton Kelly, said they already have a fabulous pool of medical staff who are ready and able to help out across rural areas if things get worse. The Network is also receiving offers of help from urban healthcare professionals whose main jobs have slowed right down as surgical procedures are cancelled and number of patient consultations in practices have significantly reduced.

[Read the media release HERE.](#)

## NETWORK IN THE NEWS - COVID-19

### GPs cry for help over mass transition to virtual consulting

RNZ's Kathryn Ryan is joined by Dr Bryan Betty, medical director of the Royal New Zealand College of GPs, Dr Ruth Large, Chair New Zealand Telehealth Leadership Group and Dr Fiona Bolden, chair of the Rural General Practice Network.

[Listen here.](#)

### Medical workers from Canterbury redeployed to fill gaps in Greymouth

Or listen to [RNZ](#) (click on March 25)

### Rural medical staff contract coronavirus, leading to 'significant' healthcare impact

## COVID-19 ADVISORIES

### Hydroxychloroquine prescribing

PHARMAC put out information recently about the off-label prescribing of hydroxychloroquine. The manufacturer Sanofi has reinforced this and signalled supply issues.

[Read more.](#)

### Also read RNZ report: Covid-19: Demand high for 'game changer' drug amid caution and optimism

### Personal Protective Equipment information - ACC

There are several questions around the use and supply of Personal Protective Equipment. The Ministry of Health has excellent resources and advice around keeping safe, and they recommend all providers familiarise themselves with this information. The most important message continues to be that basic hygiene measures are the best defence against COVID-19.

### PPE for home and community support workers

COVID-19 is a pathogen that causes illness, so it is appropriate that the Ministry is the lead agency for the delivery of prevention and care services. ACC is following the advice of the Ministry, including its guidelines for the use and distribution of PPE. As announced by the Ministry this week, home and community care workers will need to request any additional PPE through their local DHB.

### PPE for clients

ACC cannot provide PPE beyond what has already been provided for a client's injury or recovery support. If a client is concerned about their wellbeing, and feels additional PPE may be necessary for their care, a Telehealth assessment from a nurse can be requested from their contact at ACC. Please refer to the [Ministry's website](#) for the most up-to-date PPE information.

## COVID - 19 NEWS

### Coronavirus: Hundreds of doctors have hours cut, while dozens are out of work

General practitioners are at breaking point as hundreds have their hours reduced while nearly 50 have been told not to come back to work. (Stuff)

Other doctors are working for less or no pay as they desperately try to keep practices open.

[Read more.](#)

### Don't let coronavirus keep you away from your doctor, GP begs

A rural GP fears people with serious medical conditions are staying away from their doctor because of [coronavirus](#). (Stuff)

Dr Martin Mikaere, who works at Te Korowai clinic in Thames, says his clinic treats about 15 heart attacks a month in normal circumstances and a similar number of strokes and complications from diabetes.

[Read more.](#)

### Nurse case shuts down Queenstown hospital

Lakes District Hospital was cleaned from top to bottom and 36 staff were tested for Covid-19 after a nurse at the Queenstown facility tested positive to the disease driving lockdowns around the world. (ODT)

[Read more.](#)

### Coronavirus: Dr Lance O'Sullivan seeking cheaper, quicker tests, as microbiologists warn against unreliable results

Former New Zealander of the Year, Dr Lance O'Sullivan, is speaking to overseas companies about bringing cheaper, faster, but "less accurate" alternatives [coronavirus](#) tests to New Zealand. (Stuff)

But leading microbiologists are sounding a warning, worried about the implications of giving patients inaccurate results.

[Read more.](#)

### Covid 19 coronavirus: Medical students get \$40 per hour pay increase

Trainee intern doctors could earn an extra \$40 per hour on top of their existing GST-exempt \$26,756 yearly grant during the Covid-19 pandemic. (NZ Herald)

The New Zealand Medical Association was drafting employment agreements for sixth-year medical students during the outbreak.

[Read more.](#)

### Covid-19 coronavirus: J&J and Abbott announce potential vaccine and rapid test

Two US healthcare companies have brought new hope in the fight against coronavirus, with Johnson & Johnson announcing a potential vaccine that could be available early next year and Abbott Laboratories launching a rapid test kit.

J&J said on March 30 it had identified a vaccine candidate and was teaming up with the US government to invest \$1bn in its development, expecting to start testing in humans by September.

[Read more.](#)

## NZ Doctor stories – log-in required

### Receipt of Simpson Review report delayed by COVID-19

The Health & Disability System Review has been completed but will not be delivered to government until it is "ready" to receive it. Review communications manager Patricia Herbert says the ongoing nationwide response to COVID-19 means a timeline for when Heather Simpson's report will be accepted and considered is impossible to estimate. "The report will be presented when the Government is ready and we don't know when, at this stage, that will be."

The final report had been due on 30 March.

[Read more](#)

### \$15 million immediate funding relief for lockdown-hit general practices and more to come

DHBs and Ministry of Health are backing calls for a further \$10 million a week support during the lockdown. The urgent funding to support hard-hit practices was hammered out at a special video-conference yesterday between the General Practice Leaders Forum (GPLF) and primary care leaders for the DHBs and Ministry of Health.

[Read more](#)

### No. 8 wire approach to managing COVID-19 on the East Coast

The isolated East Coast's first rural [COVID-19](#) community testing centre is opening in Te Puia as part of Ngati Porou Hauora's "No. 8 wire" response to the crisis. The only community-based assessment centre (CBAC) up the coast is opening at the trust's base at Te Puia Springs Hospital, says the PHO trust chair Teepa Wawatai.

[Read more](#)

### The rural fight against COVID-19: Home-made scrubs, mobile testing and video calls

Waimate GP Sarah Creegan's practice is gearing up for cases of COVID-19, with a newly installed Portacot, scrubs made out of bedsheets, and working with the town's other general practice over mobile testing for potential cases. Dr Creegan was on holiday in Mapua, Nelson, just days before the national lockdown set in.

[Read more](#)

## Links

Ministry of Health online bulletins, click [here](#).

The Ministry of Health website has a dedicated COVID-19 [website](#).

The Royal New Zealand College of GPs has dedicated resources on their [website](#).

ACC provider updates COVID-19 click [here](#).

Leaning on Fence Posts, Otago University rural research blog, click [here](#).

Health Workforce New Zealand stakeholder bulletin, click [here](#).

Mobile Health news, click [here](#).

Medline (USA rural health) click [here](#).

Death Documents Project (Ministry of Health), click [here](#).

Health Promotion Agency (HPA) SunSmart campaign, [Click here](#)

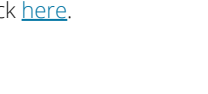
Health Quality & Safety Commission Implicit Bias (resource video), [click here](#).

### New patient resources for skin cancer

Most skin cancers are preventable. And if detected early, most can be successfully treated.

The resources can help you promote early detection to your patients

To order go to [SunSmart.org.nz](#)



### Not a member? Join the Network!

The Network is the only nationwide membership-based organisation in New Zealand representing the interests of rural general practice.

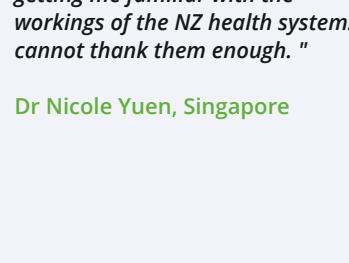
Visit our [website](#) for additional information and an online application form or contact Rob Olsen on 021 472 556.



### Testimonial

*"NZLocums has been instrumental in allowing me to fulfill my dream of relocating to New Zealand and working as a GP here. They offered me guidance from the earliest stages till the Orientation before starting work. I had a specific contact in NZLocums who helped at every stage and was very responsive to any queries I had. The Orientation material and programme were invaluable in getting me familiar with the workings of the NZ health system. I cannot thank them enough."*

Dr Nicole Yuen, Singapore



### Open your New Zealand bank account

The Network's official banking partner.

## TELL US YOUR STORY

We are looking for health sector-related stories from around rural New Zealand. People, places, achievements and challenges. If you have a good yarn to tell contact Network communications manager Rob Olsen, email [rob@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:rob@rgpn.org.nz) or 021 472 556.