

Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 15 May 2020



In this issue: Record investment in hospitals and health services • Doctors welcome \$4bn DHB funding boost but say more is needed • Funded temporary accommodation for front-line workers • Clinical guidance for responding to patients with an intellectual (learning) disability during COVID-19 much more...



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BUDGET 2020

General practitioners want to have say in division of extra support

GPs say they've been passed over in the Budget and want to be at the table when the extra health support the government has promised is divided up.

General practice did not get a mention in yesterday's Budget announcement, but Minister of Finance Grant Robertson says there will be more help for the health sector in coming months. (RNZ)

[Read more.](#)

OR listen [HERE](#).

Also READ Budget 2020: [Kelly disappointed by lack of investment in rural training hubs](#) (NZ Doctor – log-in required)

Record investment in hospitals and health services

- Record investment in DHBs of an extra \$3.92 billion (\$980 million per year)
- One-off boost of \$282.5 million (operating and capital) over three years for a planned care (including elective surgery) catch-up campaign following COVID-19 disruption
- Ongoing funding of \$31.350 million per annum (\$125.4 million over four years) to manage planned care in line with demographic changes and increasing price levels

[Read more.](#)

Doctors welcome \$4bn DHB funding boost but say more is needed

Doctors are welcoming a \$4.3 billion cash injection for district health boards but say it will take a lot more to fill the huge hole the health system has been working in. (RNZ)

[Most of the funding in the pre-budget announcements](#) is for the day to day running of district health boards, and \$282.5 million of it has been allocated for clearing backlogs because of Covid-19 in surgery, specialist appointments and scans.

[Read more.](#)

COVID-19 NEWS

Funded temporary accommodation for front-line workers

Information for workers
How to qualify
How to apply for funded temporary accommodation
Where to send completed applications.
Visit the Ministry of Health website for more information – follow the [Link](#).

Clinical guidance for responding to patients with an intellectual (learning) disability during COVID-19

People with an intellectual (learning) disability are at a heightened risk of having a poor outcome from infection with COVID-19 in comparison to non-disabled people.

[Guidelines are being provided](#) to health professionals to ensure equity for people with an intellectual disability.

This information is also available online by following this [LINK](#).

Update on the progress of review of personal protective equipment

On 21 April, the Office of the Auditor General announced its independent review of the Ministry of Health's management of personal protective equipment (PPE) required for the Covid-19 response. At the time, the review was expected to be completed in four weeks, after which the OAG would report publicly on its findings. Work is progressing well, but the original timeframe has been affected.

Once the work is finished, the draft findings will be presented to the Ministry of Health for its feedback in line with usual practice. The report is expected to be ready for presentation in Parliament as soon as possible in June.

This [update](#) has been published on their website.

The Ministry of Health's Primary Care Update: Issue 2 for general practice, PHOs and DHBs

- [Primary Care Update – May 2020](#)
- [Guidelines for Health Practitioners to securely send High Use Health Card Application forms to the Ministry of Health](#)
- [Guidance for Well Child Tamariki Ora services Covid-19 Alert Level 2](#)
- [Guidelines for Health Practitioners to securely send Special Authority Application forms to the Ministry of Health](#)

MSD makes temporary changes as part of COVID-19 response

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has made some temporary changes to document requirements as part of the COVID-19 response. The changes are helping to make things easier for people and ensure they continue to receive support during this time. Here is an overview of some key changes they've made:

[Read more.](#)

Coronavirus: testing goes to remote spots to assess Covid-19 spread

Teched up vans and mobile coronavirus testing are saving people in remote areas from driving hours to get answers. (Waikato Times)

Mobile testing or clinics are popping up in spots from Kawakawa in Northland, Taharua on the Waikato's west coast, and Reefton on the West Coast.

Also Read [West Coast DHB 'spending more than budgeted for'](#).

Covid-19: The latest news from around the world

More than 4.19 million people have been reported to be infected by the novel coronavirus globally and 285,119 have died, according to a Reuters tally.

[Here is what is taking place around the world in Covid-19 news.](#)

Also Read [Global alarm over second coronavirus wave.](#)

Flu vaccine supply puzzle for board

Supply issues with the influenza vaccine "have been a real riddle", the Southern District Health Board was told.

"I don't think it's a crisis but it's certainly not ideal," board strategy, primary and community executive director Lisa Gestro said.

[Read more.](#)

ACC's Clinical Services and the New Zealand Hip Society (in association with the New Zealand

Orthopaedic Association) have finalised the Hip Consideration Factors: Labral tears document. You can find a copy on ACC's website [here](#). This document is the latest in the consideration factor series designed to enable faster and more consistent, transparent, and fair ACC decisions. These factors are based on a review of published research evidence and expert opinion.

The document outlines the factors ACC's Clinical Advisors consider when providing their clinical advice to case owners who are assessing whether ACC can provide cover and entitlements for a hip labral tear.

It is also a useful guide for clinicians explaining ACC's approach to making cover and entitlement decisions for hip labral tear(s).

If you have any feedback please contact ACC via: clinicalquality@acc.co.nz

Discontinuation of morphine sulphate long-acting tablets (Arrow-Morphine LA)

The supplier of morphine sulphate long-acting tablets is no longer able to supply their 10 mg, 30 mg, 60 mg and 100 mg tablets (Arrow-Morphine LA) in New Zealand as a result of a discontinuation. The discontinuation only applies to tablets, not to capsules.

The supplier (Teva) has indicated that there are currently no further supplies of morphine sulphate long-acting 10 mg and 100 mg tablets. Supplies of morphine sulphate long-acting 30 mg and 60 mg tablets are likely to run out by September 2020. Morphine sulphate long-acting tablets will no longer be available once the current supply runs out.

Prescribers will need to:

- ensure no new patients are started on morphine sulphate long-acting tablets
- start transitioning patients currently on morphine sulphate long-acting tablets to alternative treatments.

Pharmac has received advice from the Analgesics Subcommittee of the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (one of their expert clinical advisory groups) that morphine sulphate long-acting capsules would be an appropriate alternative.

The capsule contains the same active ingredient as the tablet and is also taken twice daily. Currently, approximately 4,000 patients use the long-acting tablets and 20,000 patients use the long-acting capsules.

All this information is available on Pharmac's website pharmac.govt.nz/morphine-sulphate. You can keep up to date on all supply issues at pharmac.govt.nz/covid19.

If you have any questions, please contact PHARMAC at enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz

Warning over high nitrate levels in rural Hawke's Bay water

People in rural parts of Central Hawke's Bay are being urged to test drinking water bores as nitrate levels in some areas soar. (RNZ)

Hawke's Bay Regional Council data shows nitrates at some bores are nearly twice the maximum acceptable level for drinking water.

[Read more.](#)

Further unrest at nurses' union after series of setbacks

Former leaders of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation are backing a petition to remove its current board. (RNZ)

It's another setback for the union, which has recently seen the resignation of its president, vice president and three other board members.

[Read more.](#)

NZ Doctor stories – log-in required

Wheels on the mobile surgical bus resume going round and round

The mobile surgical bus is back on the road offering elective surgery after being suspended during the Level 4 lockdown as the bus is used for emergency surgical after for Canterbury DHB.

This week, the "bus" (now a truck-and-trailer unit) is parked up at the Rangiora Health Hub providing urgent general surgery treatment for patients whose elective operations have been deferred for six weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

[Read more](#)

Nurse leaders say wrong time to release Simpson report

The COVID-19 crisis is too distracting a time for release of a crucial report – that of the Heather Simpson-led health and disability system review, says the College of Nurses Aotearoa.

[Read more.](#)

Success of virtual consults yet to be finally figured: Will patients be happy and able to pay?

In the first days of lockdown, practices daily cash flow dropped by an estimated 80 per cent as in-person consults plummeted and virtual consults relied on patients paying online.

[Read more](#)

Chatham Islands breathing again after lockdown stress

Delivering healthcare to the isolated Chatham Islands is never simple but the pandemic has added extra stress and complications, says Chatham Islands Health Centre clinical nurse manager Sally Lanauze.

[Read more.](#)

ALSO read [Stressful wait on Stewart Island after busy summer of cruise ship arrivals leaves locals COVID cautious](#)

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.



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



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