

22 September 2020

Dear DHB Procurement Leads and Category Leads

PPE for general practice and pharmacy

Since revising the guidance for the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the central supply, we have been made aware of concerns regarding the settings for primary care. General practice and pharmacy makes up an important part of our health and disability workforce. There have been variable approaches to the provision of PPE to primary care between DHBs, and communication to providers on what is included in the price paid to carry out swabbing has not been clear.

To ensure general practice and pharmacy have access to the appropriate PPE, we have revised Category C in guidance for the provision from the central supply. Providers within Category C (including general practice, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) will be able to access masks from the central supply at no charge in Alert Level 2, when supported by robust evidence of demand and forecasting information. We will also supply those general practices identified as carrying out swabbing for COVID-19 with the full PPE required for that swabbing at all Alert Levels.

Masks and PPE will be provided on the condition that it is for clinical use only and will not be provided for the purposes of providing to the public.

PPE will not be supplied from the central supply to general practice and pharmacies for general use in Alert Level 1. The Ministry is confident that the commercial and retail sectors have good stocks of PPE available to purchase and we continue to monitor the overall supply chain to ensure there are no barriers to accessing appropriate PPE.

In order to ensure that masks are available in the event of an outbreak, we will soon distribute two weeks stock to general practice and pharmacy to be held in contingency for use at Alert Levels 2, 3, and 4. Four weeks stock will be distributed to general practice and pharmacy in the Auckland region, reflecting the fact that they remain at Alert Level 2 for at least two more weeks.

The revised principles for supply are attached to this email and will soon be published on the Ministry website. We encourage you to continue to refer to the webpage rather than relying on the attachment or printed versions, as there may continue to be minor revisions made.

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light green rectangular background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Kel-Watson'.

Dr Kelvin Watson
Group Manager, COVID 19 Immunisation, Testing and Supply