



Newsletter 26 June 2020

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Chair's Message



Since our last newsletter we have received the Health and Disability System Review and had some time to digest it. There is much to support in terms of the review's overall direction, but it's now all about if, and how, its recommendations will be implemented.

The review's scant attention to funding of general practice is frustrating. The broken funding model triggered the review in the first place, but two years on we are no further forward. GPNZ will be seeking urgent discussions to progress thinking on future funding options. We believe there is a continued need for a national minimum contract for general practice and that New Zealanders everywhere should have consistent access to general practice

services.

It was great to see the University of Auckland research (see article below) identify that 77% of respondents saying they felt well supported by their PHO during Covid. For us at GPNZ, one of the major disappointments was the review team's failure to acknowledge the important role that PHOs and networks play in driving improvements in population health. As with any major review, one of the biggest risks is losing the skills and expertise in our existing organisations and generating instability and insecurity through a protracted period of upheaval.

Whatever the shape of the next-generation DHBs, we know there will still be a need for strong meso-level primary care leadership and GPNZ will be working hard in to ensure that we sustain and enhance that leadership as advocates for our local populations. While we are not seeking to protect existing structures, we need to ensure that the experience, community connectedness and 'can-do' culture of primary care organisations is protected.

Implementation starts with understanding how people access care, not finetuning roles and responsibilities in national agencies and structures. We need to focus on describing how future organisations will deliver better outcomes for their local populations, and engage consumers and front line providers in those conversations. GPNZ will be seeking opportunities to play a key role in the implementation process and, in particular, helping to define and support the development of Tier 1 services.

We believe that we need to progress implementation discussions with urgency. No doubt we will see pledges emerge in the various party manifestos, and there is every likelihood that the health system will become even more of a political football over the next few months.

In the meantime, it is important that we keep on doing what we already do well in our local communities – providing planned, co-ordinated care, maintaining strong local relationships and continuing to implement and develop person-focused models of care.

He waka eke noa

Dr Jeff Lowe

Primary Care Showcase

GPNZ is working with our members to showcase successful Primary Care driven initiatives that have improved frontline health care and wellness within our member communities around the New Zealand. These initiatives will be available on our website [here](#) and we will be highlighting them also in this newsletter. Please do let us know of initiatives you want us to celebrate.



Thank you to those who have provided case studies already - one of these is Gandhi Nivas project, a partnership between Total Healthcare, NZ Police,

Serenity Foundation and Sahaayta Counselling. The project supports men to change behaviour and was originally developed for the Indian community, but has now extended to cover people of all ethnicities. A celebration of the 5th anniversary of the programme will be held at Parliament on Tuesday, hosted by Minister Jenny Salesa.

Advocating for our Members

Promoting primary care and general practice as the hub of our health system

Last week Chair, Dr Jeff Lowe, as part of the delegation from General Practice Leaders Forum, met with the Minister of Health. The delegation emphasised the urgent need for general practice funding to be looked at following the release of the Health and Disability System Review, which highlights but does not provide any recommendations to address the fundamental issue of sustainability of primary care. The delegation reminded the Minister that the issue of the primary care nursing MECA is likely to result in general practice losing nursing staff. Whilst general practice absolutely supports primary care nurses being paid fairly, this will be unsustainable if the issue is not resolved centrally. The group also raised the issue of rural hubs and the slow progress being made with these. This week Jeff has also met with Dr Ashley Bloomfield this week to emphasise our continued support for him and his team.

Over the next 6 weeks Chair Dr Jeff Lowe and CEO Liz Stockley will be visiting our members around the country to engage directly with providers, hear their view and discuss the future funding model and organisation of general practice. It is important to us that our advocacy reflects the true needs and realities of those in practice doing the mahi so please do take the opportunity to meet with us if you are able. We will be in the Bay of Plenty next week visiting Tauranga, Whakatane and Rotorua and plans are under way for visits to the Waikato, Otago, Auckland, Hutt Valley and Nelson. If you are not on the list yet, don't worry we will be visiting soon.



Research on COVID-19 impact

Impact on practices

The second in the fortnightly series of surveys on the impact of COVID-19 on general practices shows that the vast majority received strong support from the PHOs, with:

- 77% of respondents saying they felt supported by their PHO
- 53% by the RNZCGP and
- 43% by the Ministry of Health

Practices also experienced an improvement in the level of strain on their teams as the country moved into level 1, compared with the previous survey carried out in late May. However, two thirds of practices continued to see a reduction in patient volumes, while almost a third were continuing to carry out over half of their consultations by phone. Practices reported an increase in patients with mental health issues as well as a significant number of patients who were struggling with virtual access. The research is being conducted by the University of Auckland as part of an international study, with results fed through to key policy-makers. Surveys will continue fortnightly with participation open to practice staff <https://covid-19-pc.auckland.ac.nz/>.

Tell Us What You Think

Thank you for the hugely positive feedback we received following the release of our new look newsletter two weeks ago. In response to feedback we are going to be publishing fortnightly. Please keep the feedback coming – it is so important to us to hear your views.

We want to ensure that we are well representing our diverse membership and that we're communicating effectively in ways that suit you. **Please take a couple of minutes to complete this survey** to help us do that:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6PMMWF5>

Please note the survey is aimed at PHO teams, however if you do not work for a

PHO and you would like to be part of the conversation please send us an email to admin@GPNZ.org.nz we would appreciate your feedback too. And thanks to those who already have!

