



Health Roundup

August 2021

For GPs and Practice Nurses working in Auckland PHO Practices

Hello again from the Auckland PHO Clinical Team to your clinical team. Here is the August 2021 *Roundup* for your information.

I hope you are all keeping well and managing the winter ills that may have presented your way. As always so much has been happening across the sector this month which I will share below.

In order to progress the Health Reform, the Transition Unit (TU) is carrying out an information gathering exercise to capture current practice across the country, which will help to shape future local wellbeing networks, also known as localities. Auckland PHO has had extensive experience over the last ten years with the concept of locality work/provider networks/communities of interest and we have been able to share past, current and planned initiatives to the TU to support the future development of such networks.

The APHO Board and Senior Management Team have carried out Strategic workshops and future thinking planning, so that we can be agile and ready to support our member practices, with what the new Health NZ may bring!

This information gathering exercise will be followed by development of a process to select prototypes of local wellbeing networks which are expected to go live in early 2022.

One big area the TU are focusing on for the future health system are digital services, enabling people to have more options and access to the care they need in their homes and communities.

The future system will be better at connecting information and generating useful insights for clinicians to make better decisions about care, empower consumers to manage their own health, and for the system to operate more effectively and efficiently. This will include a whole-of-system approach to technology and data.

Some areas of focus will be;

- * *Transforming the consumer and clinician experience through digital technology and innovation. This means creating an environment where technology and solutions that can generate better health outcomes and efficiencies are identified, adopted and disseminated for the benefit of the system.*
- * *Joining up data in the system so wherever people may turn up in the health system, health professionals will have all relevant information to provide the best possible diagnosis and care. There will also be a focus on using data better to support system performance monitoring, planning and policy development.*
- * *Integrating Te Ao Māori in digital services at all levels and stewarding health information for betterment of people, whānau and iwi wellbeing.*
- * *Digital inclusion to enable all New Zealanders to take advantage of the digital shift the health system is undergoing.*
- * *Investing in digital and data infrastructure and people capability, so that the system can realise the high value of innovative solutions to improve health outcomes and reduce inequities.*

Further information about the progress of the health reforms is available on the Transition Unit <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-business-units/transition-unit/response-health-and-disability-system-review>

While Health NZ is being formed, we sadly watch our Australian colleagues' battle with the Delta-Variant and we must be ready for if (and when) this may come to our shores.

The Pandemic is ever evolving with emerging science and the below article provides an example on the importance of dealing with infected aerosols as an IPC strategy for IPC.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670121002693>

There is increasing recognition that for a number of pathogens there is a spectrum of likely / potential modes of transmission and airborne transmission is dependent on various host, agent and environmental factors, and potential for aerosol transmission may have been underestimated (e.g. COVID-19).

The Metro Auckland PHOs in alliance with the NRHCC are working on how we can support a Respiratory Protection Programme, escalating key areas to the Ministry of Health and associated Colleges, whereby stressing that there is a need for central leadership to give clear recommendations about IPC practice going forward, both in relation to 'living with COVID-19' and for other respiratory illness. For example, if streaming for respiratory illness is now considered best

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practice, there needs to be clear guidance to that effect, and consideration of what that will look like in future practice, given that much of primary care and urgent care delivery takes place in settings not designed to accommodate streaming and with limited mechanical ventilation. The importance of adequate ventilation in reducing COVID-19 transmission risk has become increasingly recognised and will contribute to addressing risks of other respiratory pathogens.

Protection of primary care as 'frontline' of the frontline workforce of the health system needs to be embraced as a capacity issue that has whole of system implications, along with managing risks of health care associated respiratory infections from spread between patients and from staff to patients, and risks to ongoing core primary care functions.

Thus, the pandemic has challenged the traditional management of respiratory illnesses and the transmission risks these pose in health services, across the health sector. There is a need for more formalised consideration of respiratory hazard management in primary care as part of establishing what the 'new normal' looks like.

I as Clinical Director sit on both Regional and National groups where this is being discussed and I will aim to advocate for clear guidance and centralised recognition of support for compliance resources going forward.

The MoH has just published on their website the **updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance for 8 July to 8 September 2021 and is now available [here](#).**

Key messages include:

- Testing anyone 12 years and over with symptoms of COVID-19 in all regions. Anyone who is symptomatic should be tested as a priority, irrespective of region or other risk criteria.
- People should be tested if symptomatic or subject to mandatory testing under the Required Testing Order regardless of their vaccination status.
- **At Alert Level 1**, children aged 11 years or younger who are symptomatic do not need to be tested unless any of the following apply:
 - They meet Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria;
 - They are a contact of a confirmed case;
 - A test is warranted on clinical judgement;
 - Parental request;
- On the recommendation of the local Medical Officer of Health
- **At Alert Level 2, 3 or 4**, anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, including children, should be tested.
- Testing as part of any wider case or outbreak investigation, particularly targeted testing (e.g. by geographic locations or for specific populations), may be required by the Medical Officer of Health.
- Other parameters such as testing people who are symptomatic after COVID-19 vaccination and testing in people who meet the HIS criteria or are contacts are as in. **Please remember to submit eNotifications promptly after testing and/or assessing patients for COVID-19.**

COVID-19

A reminder to:

- Maintain red and green streaming
- Triage every patient before they visit the practice ([see the new updated Script on Auckland Regional HealthPathways](#))
- PHO's encourage **medical grade masks for all staff and patients including hand sanitisation before the mask is worn. Please follow all IPC/PPE guidance accordingly**
<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/alert-level-1-ppe-guidelines-unknown-covid-status-22sept2020.pdf>

If you would like to hear more and have questions about any of the content, please contact any of Auckland PHO's clinical team, or contact Dr Charlotte Harris, Clinical Director, charlotte@aucklandpho.co.nz

COVID-19 Health Key Messages

COVID-19 Vaccine

Medical and Health System Journals

Health News

Auckland Regional Clinical Health Pathways

Educational Events

COVID-19 Health Key Messages

Please see attachment (1) for COVID-19 Health Key Messages.

Health News

PHARMAC – prescriber update

- [Consultation on proposed Invitation to Tender \(ITT\)](#)
- [Mirtazapine and clomipramine tablets: brand change](#)
- [Changes to medicines for Parkinson’s disease: selegiline and rasagiline](#)
- [Proctosedyl suppositories: supply issue](#)
- [Pimafucort cream discontinued, but ointment still available](#)
- [Atenolol oral liquid: out of stock](#)
- [Febuxostat: change to funded brand](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine

Medsafe provisionally approves Astra Zeneca vaccine

Medsafe has granted provisional approval of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for individuals 18 years of age and older. This was announced today at the media stand up.

New Zealand secured 7.6 million doses (enough for 3.8 million people) of the AstraZeneca vaccine through an advance purchase agreement last year. Provisional approval does not mean that we have committed to using the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in New Zealand as part of our Immunisation Programme.

New Zealand has secured purchase agreements with four pharmaceutical companies to manage the risk that some vaccines might not be approved for use. To have a third COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in New Zealand is welcome news!

New Zealand needs to start manufacturing COVID-19 vaccine

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners is calling on the Government to ensure New Zealand can produce and develop COVID-19 vaccines independently.

"While New Zealand has secured access to the current COVID-19 vaccine, evidence shows that the virus does mutate and is likely to require regular booster vaccinations, much like the flu-jab," says Dr Bryan Betty, Medical Director of the College.

"We cannot allow ourselves to be jostled around and forgotten in an international scramble for access to future vaccines."

[Read rnzcgp latest media release](#)

COVID-19 vaccine update

The Ministry of Health has released Issue #14 of the COVID-19 Vaccine Programme Update.

Key updates include:

- Healthline 0800 campaign
- Saliva testing approved
- Decision on disability communication funding
- Mareroa Marae supports deaf community
- Want to become a vaccination site?
- Supported decision making and consent for disabled people

[Read the full update](#)

COVID-19 vaccine 0800 number opens to group 3

From Friday, 23 July, the Ministry of Health would like to encourage anyone in Group 3 who hasn't booked their COVID-19 vaccination already to call the COVID Vaccination Healthline to book their vaccination appointment. The line will be open between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week.

COVID 19 Vaccination Healthline - 0800 28 29 26

Group 3

- Are aged 65 or over
- Have a relevant underlying health condition
- Are disabled or caring for a person with a disability
- Are pregnant (any trimester).

From Wednesday, 28 July the 0800 number will be open to the first age band (60+ years) in Group 4.

Providing the COVID-19 vaccination for disabled people and their carers – update for Metro Auckland

MEDINZ 27/07/2021 9:11:58 AM

Ensuring disabled people and their carers are vaccinated against COVID-19 continues to be a priority as part of the programme rollout.

Invitations

Disabled people and their carers have been sent an email invitation, via Taikura Trust, to book their vaccination appointments (example invitation is attached). Please ensure any of your disabled clients who are not receiving support from Taikura Trust are sent this invitation. We have also been reaching out to other disabled people and their carers through community advertisements.

For GPs and Practice Nurses working in Auckland PHO Practices

Support workers who are associated with health or disability providers have also been sent invitations to book their vaccinations.

Outreach activities

We are currently conducting an outreach programme to vaccinate disabled people in residential group homes.

Further information

A flyer is available on HealthPathways: [Providing the COVID-19 vaccination for disabled people and their carers in the Auckland region.pdf](#)

You'll find this flyer located here: [COVID-19 Vaccination Information](#) under Local Guidance > Health Professional Resources > Northern Regional Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC)

[INVITE Disabled people carers Auckland.docx](#) [125.6 KB]

Please send feedback to Katie.Daniel@health.govt.nz

Auckland Regional Clinical Health Pathways

Auckland Regional HealthPathways: pathway updates

MEDINZ 3/08/2021 6:56:59 AM.

1. [COVID-19 vaccination information](#)

Updated to include information about obtaining proof of COVID-19 vaccination for travel. See also [COVID-19 Vaccination Preparation and Aftercare](#) for information on COVID-19 vaccination catch-ups for people who have received a first dose overseas.

2. [COVID-19 Vaccination Preparation and Aftercare](#) now includes information about the national online booking system 'Book my vaccine' – found under Practices preparing to provide COVID 19 vaccination. Additions to the 'After vaccination' section include how to obtain a letter of proof of COVID-19 vaccination, a section on the rare vaccine -related event of myocarditis and pericarditis, and advice about the requirement to notify as an adverse event if the second dose is administered too soon.

3. [COVID-19 impact on clinical care](#)

A clinical editor's note has been added to this and other relevant pathways to highlight the rare, vaccine-induced Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia (VITT) which may be encountered in arriving travellers who have been vaccinated overseas with other vaccine types. Heparin and Enoxaparin are contraindicated in VITT.

4. [Gallstones](#)

Adjusted to clarify the role of POAC. POAC can be initiated for:

- extended observation time that may be required to achieve pain relief
- clinical review if pain has settled but recurs in the acute episode
- ultrasound scan if pain recurs or if there are markedly abnormal LFTs on investigation (even if the pain has settled).

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5. Dyspepsia and heartburn/ GORD

The treatment of H Pylori has been updated. GPs should be aware of red flags and risk factors associated with gastric cancer. See also some recently localised pathways:

- [child with a limp](#)
- [ectropion and entropion](#)
- [eyelid lesions](#)

Please send feedback to Indigo.matsi@middlemore.co.nz

COVID-19 vaccination programme update for primary care - webinar 3 August - recording and slides

Thank you for attending last night's Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC) COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Update for primary care.

Please see attachment (2) for slides and here's a link to the recording: [Webinar recording - 3 August](#)

You're welcome to share the slides and the recording with colleagues. The webinar recording will also be loaded on Health Pathways soon and you will receive a Medinz message when it's loaded.

Q&A sheet will be emailed to you next week and added to HealthPathways. In the meantime, if you have specific queries, please contact Leanne Kirton, NRHCC Vaccination Primary Care Lead:

Leanne.Kirton@waitematadhb.govt.nz

The next COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Update webinar will be in September. The NRHCC will email the registration details soon.

Medical and Health System Journals

Respiratory Research Review Issue 187

In July 2021, the WHO recorded 185 million cases and 4 million deaths from COVID-19. In comparison, a quarter of the world's population (1.7 billion) are infected with, 10 million suffer active symptoms of, and 1.4 million die each year from TB (tuberculosis).

Some of the highlights in this review include:

- Impact of global TB control on health and economic outcomes
- Deep amplicon sequencing for predicting susceptibility/resistance to anti-TB drugs
- BACES for predicting mortality in nontuberculous mycobacterial pulmonary disease

[view the issue online](#)

GP Research Review issue 174

This issue looks at the comparative effectiveness of aspirin dosing in cardiovascular disease and learn that it is still ok to continue prescribing a 100 mg dose.

Other highlights in this review include:

- * Tympanostomy tube or medical management for acute otitis media
- * Oral cannabidiol for acute low back pain
- * Chinese massage for type 2 diabetes

[view this issue online](#)

Internal Medicine Research Review Issue 71

This issue starts with 3 COVID-related studies that report the number of adverse thrombotic events associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine, the number of excess deaths from COVID-19 in high-income countries in 2020, and the effectiveness of COVID vaccines against the delta variant.

Other highlights include:

- ZED1227 shows promise for coeliac disease
- Physical rehabilitation in older patients hospitalised with heart failure
- 6 vs 12 weeks of antibiotic therapy for prosthetic joint infection

[view the issue online](#)

Māori Health Review issue 92

This issue highlights the high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences in New Zealand, and the association with exposure to violence in adulthood.

Other highlights include:

- Ethnically disparate outcomes for acute rheumatic fever
- Psychological distress following injury
- Glycaemic control in type 1 diabetes

[view the issue online](#)

Educational Events

Assisted dying workforce forum

Registrations open until 6 August

The Ministry of Health is hosting a workforce forum at the end of September to bring together health practitioners and others in the health workforce who are likely to be involved in providing assisted dying services. It will be an opportunity to ask questions, establish networks with peers, and learn about the assisted dying service and roles within it. Health practitioners who would like to be involved in providing assisted dying services are encouraged to attend this event. The second day of the forum will include practical training related to providing assisted dying services.

[Register for the forum](#)