

General Practice Leaders' Forum

8 December 2023

Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Health
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Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Via email: s.retil@ministers.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister Reti

The General Practice Leaders' Forum (GPLF) is a collaboration of organisations that represent various aspects of general practice. The organisations include Hauora Taiwhenua, General Practice New Zealand (GPNZ), General Practice Owners (GenPro), Practice Managers and Administrators of New Zealand (PMAANZ), The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP), New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), and New Zealand College of Primary Care Nurses.

All health workers represented by these organisations work in the community, deliver close to 23 million consultations a year, see the highest health needs of those communities, and the impact of policies that affect health outcomes.

GPLF recognises that with any coalition agreement there must be compromise. We the undersigned are concerned that the compromises of this coalition agreement may have serious impact on health outcomes for New Zealanders and take the focus of health care away from critical areas that have a significant impact. In particular,

Statements on the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act

- Repeal amendments to the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 and regulations before March 2024, removing requirements for denicotinisation, removing the reduction in retail outlets and the generation ban, while also amending vaping product requirements and taxing smoked products only.
- Reform the regulation of vaping, smokeless tobacco and oral nicotine products while banning disposable vaping products and increasing penalties for illegal sales to those under 18
- Repeal the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Act 2022 to remove the requirements for denicotinisation and the reduction in retail outlets.
- Introduce serious penalties for selling vapes to under 18s and consider requiring a liquor licence to sell vapes.



Smoking kills. Nicotine is highly addictive. The repeal of the smoke free environments and regulated products act has the potential to put lives at risk.

We the undersigned expect that with the proposed amendments to Smokefree Legislation, there will be additional actions that will ensure a continued reduction in the use, and health impact of smoked tobacco and nicotine products. Furthermore, that targets are set, monitored and actions/legislation reviewed.

Statements on medical admissions schemes and international medical graduates

- Better recognise people with overseas medical qualifications and experience for accreditation in New Zealand.
- Better recognise people with overseas medical qualifications and experience for accreditation in New Zealand including consideration of an occupation's tribunal.
- Examine the Māori and Pacific Admission Scheme (MAPAS) and Otago equivalent to determine if they are delivering desired outcomes.

The health workforce in New Zealand should reflect the population they serve. New Zealand has the highest number of international medical graduates in the OECD and registered more than 1,000 overseas graduates last year and just over 500 domestic graduates. The percentage of both Māori and Pasifika health workers does not reflect their percentage in the population, and reliance on overseas graduates will dilute this further.

We the undersigned expect that any effort put into increasing the medical workforce will focus on growing our own. We also expect that an evidence-based approach will be used to reflect that improvements in health outcomes occur when communities are served by health professionals who reflect the ethnic diversity in those communities.

Statements on abolishing the Māori Health Authority/Te Aka Whai Ora

- Abolish the Māori Health Authority.
- Disestablish the Māori Health Authority.

Under The Treaty of Waitangi, the Crown has an obligation to meet the health and wellbeing needs of Māori to the same extent as they do for any other New Zealander. To achieve this, it requires focused attention on the health outcomes for the Māori population. There is no doubt that in most health statistics Māori are worse off.

We the undersigned expect that with any change in the structure of the health organisations, that there will be specific focus on Māori health outcomes, and this will be championed and a target for improvement.

GPLF would like to constructively work with the Minister of Health and coalition partners to enable improvements in health outcomes and continue progress in a positive direction.

Ngā mihi



Dr Bryan Betty
Chair, GPNZ



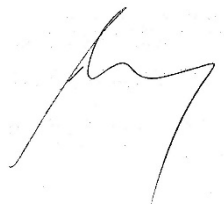
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