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## Nothing about us without us? Wrong



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to Read



General practice leader Vanessa Weenink objects to officials' reticence about changes to the sector []

**A review of capitation funding for general practice appears to be under way behind closed doors – without input from practices.**

**The feared review, COVID-19 funding and sustainable general practice were discussed at an urgent meeting of the General Practice Leaders Forum on 17 February and at the forum's Contracted Provider Caucus meeting on 22 February.**

Forum chair Fiona Bolden and caucus chair Vanessa Weenink told *New Zealand Doctor Rata Aotearoa* they had not been made aware any formal capitation funding review was taking place.

But Dr Bolden says the Practice Managers and Administrators Association of New Zealand (PMAANZ) had been asked by consultants Sapere to send out a survey to all practices to help guide future funding options.

As for the caucus, Dr Weenink in a statement said it was concerned the review was being “undertaken behind closed doors, without any transparency and without engagement or representation from the sector”.

Dr Weenink, chair of the NZMA GP Council, issued the statement after the caucus meeting, saying they had discussed concerns a capitation review was potentially going ahead within the health reforms Transition Unit without caucus input. That is despite the caucus representing all general practice contracted providers.

The caucus has not been consulted, nor has it sighted any terms of reference, nor agreed a process for the review, the statement says.

Dr Weenink tells *New Zealand Doctor* she is frustrated the caucus, as a single point of contact for all general practice providers, was not being consulted on announcements and changes affecting a stretched general practice workforce.

“It doesn’t have to be this way,” she says via email.

The caucus discussed further action it might take on the review, including a request for terms of reference. It also endorsed a proposed paper on how the current capitation funding formula is “not fit for purpose”, to present to the next PHO Services Agreement Amendment Protocol group meeting.

Dr Bolden says work is ongoing on funding issues, with all members committed to transparency and ensuring access to quality general practice.

Speaking prior to the forum meeting, she said members were concerned about the pandemic’s undermining practices’ ability to provide sustainable care.

“When you’ve got a system that has not had proper funding for decades and decades, and you start pushing it into a pandemic, that’s when the wheels start wobbling.

“I think the wheels are wobbling pretty hard at the moment.”

PMAANZ chair Michelle Te Kira says the association was asked just before Christmas to send out the Sapere survey to members on overhead costs faced by practices.

The survey foreword says Sapere has been “commissioned to provide advice to interim Health New Zealand and the interim Māori Health Authority on options for the future of primary care funding”. The new entities come into being on 1 July.

## **The teams**

## **General Practice Leaders Forum members**

RNZCGP, NZMA, the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network (NZRGPN), General Practice NZ, the General Practice Owners Association (GenPro), NZ Nurses Organisation, Practice Managers and Administrators Association of New Zealand (PMAANZ).

## **Contracted Provider Caucus members**

NZMA, RNZCGP, GenPro, NZRGPN.

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