

13 September 2023

Primary and Community Health Collective call for action on pay parity

Tēnā koe e ngā Rangatira,

We represent organisations at the forefront of the health and wellbeing of whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand, collectively treating and caring for thousands of New Zealanders, including our most vulnerable elderly, hapū māmā, pēpi and tamariki, and those who are dying.

We wholeheartedly endorse the recent historic pay equity settlement for Te Whatu Ora nurses and healthcare workers. However, this deserved increase has starkly increased pay disparity with those working in primary and community care. That gap is now between 15 and 35 per cent.

Our primary and community care workforce complete the same education, undertake additional training and skills development and provide vital care and support to thousands of people every day. There is no justification for them not being remunerated equally.

Consequently, our nurses and healthcare workers feel undervalued and disrespected, and understandably many feel that they have no option but to leave satisfying careers in primary and community services for better pay as Te Whatu Ora employees. Our ability to recruit, as well as to retain staff, has been severely impacted – no matter how rewarding a primary or community care role may be, a hospital role paying significantly more is attractive in the current economic climate.

The impact that the pay parity gap has on the delivery of essential health services has reached crisis point and can no longer be ignored. This situation is ultimately putting the health and quality of life for New Zealanders at risk. Vulnerable members of our communities are missing out on services they need and are being forced into an already overrun hospital system that is also at its breaking point.

The workforce situation is crippling essential services - Whānau Āwhina Plunket has 35 nurse vacancies, potentially impacting 140 Well Child Tamariki Ora core contacts to pēpi and tamariki every day; in an unprecedented situation, some of the 30 Family Planning clinics had to close last month because of a lack of staff; general practices nationwide are being forced to reduce services and opening hours; more than 1,000 aged care beds have closed permanently; and a number of hospices have reduced their inpatient beds.

As we head into the general election, we are asking for a commitment from political parties that they will urgently address the pay disparity between Te Whatu Ora-employed nurses and healthcare workers, and those working in the primary and community health sector.

We seek a response by 20 September on your party's position to achieve pay parity for primary and community nurses and healthcare workers, including your timeframe for action. We are planning a nationwide media campaign to raise public awareness of the impact our workforce shortage is having on essential services. Your response will be included in our campaign.

About us

Between our organisations, we have the privilege and responsibility to provide true cradle-to-grave care. We:

- deliver 21 million contacts with patients at general practices every year
- deliver 170,000 client contacts for sexual and reproductive health
- provide home and community support services to more than 100,000 people each year
- provide over 1 million Nurse Maude visits

- support over 10,000 hospice patients who die
- provide 481,500 hospice patient and whānau contacts, and over 28,000 hospice inpatient bed days
- provide Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO) services to nearly 80 per cent of babies and have WCTO contact with over 300,000 whānau with tamariki under the age of five
- provide 24/7 PlunketLine for parents and a national client contact centre by FPNZ
- responded to over 2.2 million national telehealth service contacts, connecting with nearly 1.6 million individual people
- provide clinical and community education and quality standards.

Should you wish to discuss this further please contact our group representative Fiona Kingsford, Manahautū | Chief Executive, Whānau Āwhina Plunket on Fiona.Kingsford@plunket.org.nz.

Nā mātou noa, nā

Fiona Kingsford
Chief Executive
Whānau Āwhina Plunket



whānau āwhina
plunket

Maura Thompson
Chief Executive
General Practice New Zealand



Jim Magee
Chief Executive
Nurse Maude



Jackie Edmond
Chief Executive
Family Planning New Zealand



Wayne Naylor
Chief Executive
Te Kahu Pairuri o Aotearoa - Hospice New Zealand



Dr Samantha Murton
President
The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners



Simon Dowd
Chair
New Zealand Aged Care Association



Carmela Petagna
Chief Executive,
Home and Community Health Association



Dr Fiona Bolden
Chair
Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network



Chief Executive
Access Community Health



Dr Angus Chambers, Chair
General Practice Owners Association of Aotearoa New Zealand



Glynis Sandland
Chief Executive Officer
Whakarongorau Aotearoa



Michelle Te Kira, Executive Chair
Practice Managers and Administrators Association of New Zealand

