

25 March 2020

Open Letter to District Health Boards

### **National Reserve Supply (NRS) stored by DHBs**

Firstly, thank you to each and every DHB staff member throughout New Zealand working hard on the front line to protect New Zealanders in these uncertain times. We appreciate how busy you are at this time but we believe it is timely for each of New Zealand's District Health Boards (DHB) to make public its register of all the medical items it stores on behalf of the National Reserve Supply (NRS). Making the extent of the NRS available to the public will enable New Zealand to use the opportunity that the COVID-19 Alert 4 provides. This window will enable New Zealand to:

1. know what medical items need to be rationed early and/or substituted;
2. fill supply gaps (e.g. Hamilton-based brewery Good George is now producing hand sanitiser); and
3. order medical items from other countries (e.g. Australia, China or Singapore).

Since late January the McGuinness Institute has been trying to understand what supply chain risks might arise if the epidemic in China became a pandemic. We have organised these risks into three categories of supply chain management, those impacting on:

1. healthcare workers, enabling them to stay safe while treating patients (e.g. personal protective equipment [PPE]);
2. patients, enabling them to get the best medical care (e.g. ventilators); and
3. the wider population, differentiating between people that are infected and not infected (e.g. testing equipment).

We are working with a diverse number of people on this issue who would like to know this information, such as philanthropists, manufacturers, procurement officers, doctors and nurses. To this end we are asking all DHBs to share with us, and ideally place on their websites, the following information as applicable on the items listed below: the locations (e.g. hospital name), quantities, brand names, number of uses (i.e. are they disposable or reusable?), purchase dates and expiry dates:

1. Gowns
2. Masks
3. Goggles
4. Gloves
5. Disinfectant (e.g. bleach)\*
6. Hand sanitiser\*
7. Oxygen tanks\*
8. CT scanners\*
9. Medical ventilators\*

The items asterisked above are ones for which we understand the information might need to be sought from hospitals in your district. For this reason, we thought a two batch approach to supplying this information might be realistic, Batch 1 being the PPEs (1–4 above) and Batch 2 (5–9).

We are confident the lockdown will prevent the escalation of COVID-19 cases, but New Zealand needs to be prepared for the possibility that the lockdown and the quarantine of arrivals were actioned too late. The Institute explores low probability/high magnitude events, and as such, we believe DHBs hold critical information that should be made public to enable any supply chain gaps (if they exist) to be filled.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or comments.

Ngā mihi,



Wendy McGuinness  
Chief Executive