

22 December 2021

Dr Ashley Bloomfield  
Director-General of Health and Chief Executive  
Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013  
Wellington 6140

Dear Dr Bloomfield,

### **OIA 2021/15: Health care system design and implementation**

Thank you for responding to our OIA 2021/08: Risk Management (your letter of 16 December 2021). I would particularly like to thank Darryl Carpenter and his team for their work in delivering a comprehensive response to our many questions. I appreciate how challenging it is at this time, and that events are moving very quickly, so thank you for taking the time to share key gaps in our understanding of the current system. Together, the responses provide useful background information for our COVID-19 timeline and other areas of research. The Institute continues to monitor progress and chronicle events under our *Project PandemicNZ*; ongoing and new work in this space is briefly outlined below:

1. COVID-19 timeline (found [here](#)) – ongoing
2. *A Suppression Strategy: Living with COVID-19 in the Year 2022* (found [here](#)) – currently version 9, ongoing
3. *Discussion Paper 2021/03: A COVID-19 Situational Report* as at 1 September 2021 (found [here](#)) – ideally the situational report will be updated every six months.

### **District Health Board Survey (new)**

Please find attached a pdf of the survey sent to each District Health Board. Topics include an integrated health care strategy, COVID-19 and future-proofing the health care system. Our aim is to contribute to the development of a health care system that is able to withstand surges of COVID-19 variants, as well as be ready for future pandemics and environmental disasters (e.g. eruptions and earthquakes). To do this, we see this survey as a way to learn more about the issues DHBs currently face and the broader challenges that may exist for the health care system going forward. Given the upcoming health reform (to centralise the health care system from July 2022), we see the survey as a one-off opportunity to gather important insights. The survey results will be written up, along the lines of the Institute's earlier surveys and working papers. Previous examples include: *Survey Insights: An analysis of the 2020 NZNO PPE Survey* (found [here](#)) and *Working Paper 2020/12 - An analysis of the responses to the 'Open Letter to District Health Boards (dated 25 March 2020)'* (found [here](#)). Once complete, the survey results will be sent to each DHB, the Minister of Health, and of course, the Ministry of Health.

To help us with all our work listed above, we have a few additional questions. Given it is the summer break, there is no pressure to provide a response until Wednesday 9 February 2022, but this can be further extended if necessary.

### **Questions related to entry into New Zealand**

#### **Question 1: Cost recovery for MIQ**

We want to understand the extent to which the cost of a seven day stay for an individual at MIQ (\$1610) was being met by travellers or by the Government. In addition, can you clarify the current policy for cost recovery? For example to what extent is the Government aiming for 'almost full recovery' or 'partial recovery'? Could you provide an assessment of your existing financial assessment and any projections you may have?

Note: We are aware of your statement that 'all stays in MIQ will be extended to 10 days', found on your website [here](#).

**Question 2: Comparison of home stay versus MIQ stay**

Was the self-isolation pilot for business travellers successful? Can you provide the report assessing the results of the pilot? The fee for the self-isolation pilot was \$1000 for 14 days (based on the link found [here](#)). Can you advise how the fee is being treated for accounting purposes – is it being treated as: (i) revenue or (ii) as part of a cost recovery exercise? Can you explain?

**Question 3: Restrictions to countries**

Is MOH currently reconsidering its view about restricting entry from high-risk countries (e.g. South Africa)?  
Note: Our view is that assessments should be on a person-by-person not a country-by-country basis, as people should all be assessed as though they have the virus (to both prevent discrimination and to manage risks). Any additional comments would be very welcome.

**Questions related directly to COVID-19****Question 4: COVID-19 National Hospital Response Framework**

What is the latest version of the COVID-19 National Hospital Response Framework? Who is responsible for updating this? What requirements are being placed on hospitals to implement this framework?  
Note: we have found the framework poorly communicated in DHBs and hospitals.

**Question 5: Oxygen hubs for rural areas**

What facilities are being provided to isolated rural communities in terms of oxygen supply? Has MOH considered establishing oxygen hubs in rural communities under the management of major COVID-19 hospitals?

**Question 6: National reserve supply (NRS)**

We note that you are recording COVID-19 vaccines in other public locations but believe this figure should also be kept on the NRS and updated monthly (alongside the H5N1 pre-pandemic influenza vaccines). Given this, what is the reason for keeping H5N1 vaccines on the NRS, but not COVID-19 vaccines?

**Questions related to the design of New Zealand's health care system****Question 7: Integrated health care strategy**

Have you created an integrated health care strategy (ideally on one A3 page)? If yes, please provide a copy of this. If not, is this something MOH thinks would be beneficial and if yes, is this something MOH is working on?

**Question 8: Dashboard**

Have you developed a dashboard to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system for (i) each hospital, (ii) DHB or (iii) the country as a whole?

**Question 9: Benchmarking the health care system**

Is the MOH collecting data (estimated or projected) on either (i) elective procedures and (ii) outpatient attendances? If yes, please advise who is responsible for collecting this data and how the Institute can access the data. (See for example, two previous graphs that we have created using UK data, being Figures 1 and 2, found at the front of the DHB survey, attached.) If not, are there any plans to collect this data in the future? Please explain who will be responsible for collecting this data and when.

**Question 10: HealthPathways**

Is the MOH ensuring that HealthPathways for patients are the same across all DHBs? See example [here](#). Please explain who is doing this work.

**Question 11: Review of key plans**

We are pleased to note that a review is being planned for the 2013 *National Health Emergency Plan National Reserve Supplies Management and Usage Policies* and the 2017 *New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Plan*. Does this review include the 2015 *National Health Emergency Plan (NHEP)*? Are you able to share the terms of reference for the review (including the scope, timing and who will undertake the review)? Note: We would like the opportunity to comment.

**Questions related to the health system reform in July 2022****Question 12: Consultation**

Is there any opportunity for the public to comment on these proposals, or will they be implemented without any further public engagement? Note: We understand that the UK and others are considering moving to decentralise (rather than centralise) their health care system given their experience of COVID-19 (see wider discussion [here](#) and [here](#)). The proposed reforms were designed before COVID-19 lessons were identified and understood.

**Question 13: Timing of the reform?**

Has the MOH advised (or are they considering advising) the Minister and others that this is an inappropriate time to implement a reform of this scale? Note: We understand the health reform is planned to take effect from 1 July 2022. This will be the biggest change in the way the health and disability system of Aotearoa New Zealand is organised since District Health Boards were established 1 January 2001. This seems a risky time to implement a new system given it is likely to be the same time that we will see major COVID-19 surges in New Zealand and the level of consultation will have been sorely hampered due to COVID-19.

Please be aware that all responses to the Institute's OIAs are placed on the OIA Table on the McGuinness Institute website [here](#). Note: Personal names are retracted.

Thank you again for your help. We wish you all a very relaxing summer break, ready for 2022.

Best wishes,



Wendy McGuinness  
Chief Executive

Attachment 1: District Health Board Survey