

13 June 2023

To: General Practice Leaders' Forum: attn Dr Bryan Betty, Dr Fiona Bolden, Dr Tim Malloy, Dr Sam Murton, Paul Goulter, Michelle Te Kira

Tēnā koutou katoa,

### **GPLF joint response to draft Prescription Notice**

Thank you for your letter to me dated 7 June 2023 in response to the draft prescription notice issued 19 May 2023, and for taking the time to continue the dialogue on the goal of keeping people well and achieving Pae Ora Healthy Futures.

I note and welcome the concerted voice of general practice as represented by the joint signatures on your letter, and I am looking forward to working with you on the matters you have collectively raised.

Your response to the uplift offer from Te Whatu Ora to PHOs is noted. You and your member organisations play a vital role in the provision of primary care services, and I want to thank you for your contribution to robust discussions on factors affecting the primary care sector.

Despite the challenges of the short-term funding environment in which I do not have room to move any further on the five percent uplift offer, we are committed to addressing the longer-term issues that require urgent attention and that you have listed.

Your letter outlined a number of proposals and work areas regarding the funding and workforce contributors to general practice, many of which match our current workplan, as I know you are aware, and some of which present new ideas to consider which I welcome.

Whilst the five percent annual uplift represents the single largest increase to capitation in recent times equating to over \$63.5m in new funding that will be directed to general practices in ongoing and sustainable funding, being mindful of the immediate pressures on general practice, we have worked hard to wrap around additional support by providing funding to more targeted areas, in addition to the annual uplift.

An additional 29.5 percent investment has been secured for immunisation. This represents an additional \$10.5m on top of a 20 percent increase last year. These investments are directly aimed at supporting the services provided by practice nursing teams.

Other new funding announced includes:

- reducing nursing pay disparities (approximately \$31m)
- the capitation equity adjustment (\$24.4m in the 2023-2024 year), and
- \$102m over three years supporting general practice with the Comprehensive Primary and Community Care Teams.

We acknowledge that this additional funding does not fully address primary care issues and that further work is required.

We agree that workforce is a key component of our health services. It takes time to deliver meaningful increases in numbers of clinical staff, regardless of the available funding. Te Whatu Ora has increased the funding for Community Based Attachments since January 2023 that incentivises and supports more general practices to take on Postgraduate Year 1 and 2 doctors doing pre-vocational training. Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora are working with RNZCGP to strengthen the GP training pathway and increase the number of GPs trained per year to 300 by 2026, with a focus on growing more Māori and Pacific GPs. This includes a 20 percent increase in the salaries for GP registrars in training employed by RNZCGP to bring them broadly in line with what they would earn in a hospital registrar programme.

Te Whatu Ora remains highly aware of workforce shortages and the reports of strain and burnout, particularly in rural locations. This is not confined to New Zealand, and we acknowledge the international shortages in the health workforce.

Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora are implementing a number of initiatives to ensure there is capacity in the system. For example, the seasonal telehealth overflow service has been available since December 2022 for all rural, Māori and Pacific general practices and it provides fully funded GP and practice nurse consultations for patients when general practices are at capacity. This was extended from being a summer seasonal service and will be in place until a wider and permanent solution is available. A request for proposal process has been released to secure a long-term rural telehealth service. We anticipate announcements about this service will be made over the coming weeks.

I restate my commitment to working with you collectively to reimagine the future for general practice in Aotearoa and to determine how we can achieve equitable outcomes for all community members.

I look forward to further constructive discussions, where we can take these matters forward.

Yours sincerely



**Abbe Anderson**

National Director Commissioning