

PANDEMIC COMMUNICATION: COVID-19 PROVIDER NETWORK UPDATE

This update is prepared by the Capital & Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards. It is consistent with Ministry of Health advice. The Ministry of Health remains the definitive source of information.

Our focus is on ensuring you have the information you need, when you need it, in order for you to care for your staff and the people who depend on your service.

Any questions regarding this communication may be directed to COVID-19Questions@ccdhb.org.nz. All emails to the COVID-19 email address will be logged and responded to by an appropriate team member.

The purpose of this advice is to provide updates and guidance on:

- What Level 2 looks like
- PPE and Level 2
- Initiatives to support the health and disability workforce
- Visitors in Level 2
- Surveillance Testing – Shout Out to our PHOs
- Over 70s
- Flu vaccines
- Our Pacific Community
- Workforce Office
- Disability Support Services
- Food Security
- Community provider resources on website

We move to Alert Level 2 at 11.59pm tonight – Wednesday 13 May 2020.

WHAT LEVEL 2 LOOKS LIKE

In level 2 we will re-start the providing of services that were not possible in Alert Levels 4 and 3. As always, keeping staff and patients safe still remains a top priority while we wait on the Ministry's guidance about health and disability services at Alert Level 2. This will be available on the Ministry's website soon.

What we know so far is that at Alert Level 2:

- Virtual appointments (online or telephone) are encouraged wherever possible, for outpatient, GP, and community health appointments.
- All visitors to aged residential care facilities need to be assessed for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and asked about their travel history and history of contact of people with COVID-19. General family visits are allowed but the number of family members visiting and frequency of visiting needs to be regulated. [More advice on this is found later in this document.](#)
- Aged residential care facilities can operate at their full scope with appropriate health control measures in place. Planned respite and urgent respite care will be available.
- Infection prevention and control measures must be followed, and physical distancing should be to the greatest extent possible.

PPE AND LEVEL 2

As the country moves to Alert Level 2 we will continue to supply PPE to those providers we have been supplying it to over Levels 4 & 3. This will continue until the Ministry indicates we should cease.

We are still assessing – along with the Ministry of Health – what we will supply to other clinical providers who are now starting work again under Alert Level 2. We will advise you as soon as we have this information.

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND DISABILITY WORKFORCE

Today the Government announced three initiatives as part of its ongoing COVID-19 Response Package. These initiatives support our workforce through accommodation, mental health support and access to specialist clinical advice on COVID-19.

1. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HEALTH AND DISABILITY WORKERS

Frontline workers, in our hospitals, aged care and other residential facilities and in the community, who need to stay away from their homes during COVID-19 to keep their whānau safe may qualify for funded temporary accommodation.

Further information about eligibility and the process to access funded temporary accommodation is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

2. PHONE COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

An 0800 number has been set up to provide extra support to frontline health workers who may be experiencing distress or heightened anxiety at this challenging time.

HealthCare NZ is delivering this new free psychological health and wellbeing support service as part of uniting against COVID-19. This confidential phone-based service is available to frontline healthcare workers from doctors and nurses through to community based clinical and care workers.

- Free access to psychological health and wellbeing support
- Available now - Call 0800 820 080.
- Open Monday - Friday 9am to 7pm
- Tailored to support your needs
- Confidential and accessible for all frontline health and care workers

Call 0800 820 080 to book an appointment with one of our experienced team of specialists for a time that works for you. **A poster is attached for your use.**

3. 0800 COVID-19 CLINICAL ADVICE NUMBER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS.

A dedicated phone line for community health providers including general practice nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, pharmacists, midwives and aged residential care providers has been established.

The helpline will offer general advice about management of COVID-19, peer review of presenting problems and advice on specialist referral or connection to other services.

The number is 0800 177 622, and is now operational, offering clinical support and advice Monday to Saturday 8am -7pm (with the exception of public holidays).

VISITORS TO RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES IN ALERT LEVEL 2

Bubbles are getting bigger in Level 2 so we urge residential facilities and other services to remain vigilant with visitors. There is a level of excitement as people are anticipating being able to see friends and family, and it is not unexpected that people will want to visit your residents. We only urge you to continue with the excellent

practices you have put in place during Alert Levels 4 and 3. Residential facilities are vulnerable places, and an outbreak could be devastating. Remember to take precautions such as:

- Specify visiting hours
- Record visitors coming in and out to aid contact tracing if it is required
- One visitor per resident and maintain distancing – especially between visitors and your staff
- Don't allow anyone to visit if they are sick or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or flu
- Be diligent with hand hygiene and cleaning – especially high touch surfaces.
- Limit visits to specific times, and limiting the number of visitors allowed so distancing can be achieved

More information and guidance can be found

https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/visitor_fact_sheet_for_arc.pdf

Remember if there is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your facility, you will need to operate as if you are in Alert Level 4 or 3 and no general family visits are allowed.

WIDENING THE TESTING CIRCLE – SHOUT OUT TO OUR PHOS

Last week the Ministry of Health asked for a significant increase in testing especially around asymptomatic healthcare and essential workers at CBACs and general practices. This included clinical and support staff such as those meeting and greeting and providing security, admin staff and the staff actually doing the swabbing, staff working in the mobile teams, and any general practice staff who wanted to be tested.

Our PHOs – Tu Ora Compass, Ora Toa, Te Awakairangi, and Cosine – stepped up to the challenge with less than a day's notice and swabbed more than 1000 people over a 48 hour period.

Testing was voluntary, and we have been impressed by the uptake and willingness from the workforce.

The four objectives of this testing approach are:

- Quickly identifying all cases of COVID-19, in order to isolate them and trace and quarantine their contacts, including as part of managing cluster outbreaks
- Ensuring that access to testing is equitable – for Māori and Pacific people and other priority groups, as well as across the country.
- Identify any undetected community spread in New Zealand
- Monitoring for any COVID-19 in people at higher risk of exposure to help ensure the safety systems in place are working.

The short time period allowed for the labs to process the tests over the weekend and so a report could be delivered to the Ministry of Health by 5pm on Sunday. It was an astonishing effort. The best news is that no positive results were returned.

Why has the Wellington region been so successful at keeping COVID-19 case numbers low? We believe it is because we have tested high volumes early and as a result as at 5pm Monday 11 May we had performed almost 18,000 tests across the two DHBs – Hutt Valley and Capital and Coast – with a positivity rate under 1%.

Our general practices have also moved to virtual and tele-health consultations quickly and smoothly – another contributor to reducing the potential for COVID-19 to spread among healthcare and essential workers.

TESTING CONTINUES

Surveillance testing for asymptomatic people will continue over the coming weeks and will include Aged Residential Care staff and pharmacy staff. Testing is voluntary. You will be advised in advance of this happening, but if you have any questions please email COVID-19questions@ccdhb.org.nz

SHOUT OUT TO OUR LABS

If you think testing 1000 people over two days is impressive, give a round of applause to our people at WSCL who stayed open 24 hours to process them all. This is no mean feat and is a testament to the dedication and commitment all of our people show in their efforts to reach our goal of finding every case we can, and eliminating COVID-19.

GUIDANCE FOR OVER 70S

Regional Public Health has issued guidance for over 70s which continues to encourage older people to stay home as much as possible, while also keeping active. It also encourages people to seek medical help for any new or existing conditions as soon as symptoms arise, don't wait. Health clinics are open, so phone ahead and get the help required. **See the attached document.**

FLU VACCINATIONS

One main piece of advice from the RPH guidance for over 70s is to get a flu vaccination from their GP or pharmacy. This advice applies also to healthcare workers. It could be said healthcare workers have a duty of care to protect their patients, especially vulnerable patients who are at greater risk of developing complications from influenza. Relying on people in your care being vaccinated is not enough; many of our vulnerable older people have a poor immune response to vaccine.

Remember, flu is easy to catch through coughs and sneezes. Influenza is much worse than a cold. Many people don't know they have had the flu as they do not feel ill. But they can still pass it on and make other people sick.

MĀORI FLU VACCINATION RATES

Nationally, over half of Māori aged 65 and over have had their flu vaccination. This is double the rate for the same time last year. Protecting this vulnerable group, whose immunisation rates have historically been significantly lower than those of the wider population, is vital.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure older Māori are able to access influenza vaccination. The initiatives that have helped to achieve this higher immunisation rate are definitely something we want to continue and take forward into the future influenza seasons. It's great to see higher uptake than ever by all New Zealanders, in particular vulnerable children and adults, and older people.

FLU TRACKING SURVEY

Flutracking is an online survey which asks whether you have had a fever or cough in the last week and can help track COVID-19. Registering online will help our surveillance efforts by providing early detection of community spread of the flu and also of COVID-19 symptoms.

We encourage people to register online at www.flutracking.net

This is a practical thing everyone can do to help monitor flu and COVID-19 symptoms throughout New Zealand.

OUR PACIFIC COMMUNITY

We have been working alongside our Pacific community to support them with messaging and collateral, as well as using our own channels to share specific Pasifika resources.

One excellent resource is the website <http://www.preparepacific.nz> which is an initiative of the three Auckland DHBs and Northland DHB. It is a highly visual site in nine languages including English, and videos on almost everything to do with COVID-19.

WORKFORCE OFFICE

The workforce office remains open as your second line of support after your usual mechanisms for identifying resources have been exhausted. Send an email to COVID-19commWorkforce@ccdhb.org.nz

Include the following details in the email:

1. Location for the work
2. Type of work/key skills/qualifications required
3. Number of staff required
4. COVID risk assessment /PPE required
5. Days/time estimate of work
6. On-site contact details
7. Urgency of placement

We'll match your requirements to the request (including any feasible training requirements) and send you back a list of potential candidates for you to contact. This will be communicated from the above email address.

For General Practice and Community Based Assessment Centres your PHO is your first point of contact.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES AT LEVEL 2

The **attached guidance** from Ministry of Health outlines what is allowed, and what is required at Alert Level 2. It contains advice for people with disabilities as well as those supporting them and includes the services which are now available in Level 2 including equipment, housing and vehicle modifications being able to go ahead, hearing and vision services, and rehabilitation therapies. NASC appointments will also resume but will continue to work over the phone or virtually where possible.

FOOD SECURITY

We thought you may be interested in these [Translated Food Security Fliers](#) – available not only in Pacific languages but in te reo, Asian, and Middle Eastern languages as well. These fliers were developed by Wellington City Council. Please share with your networks.

Do you need food?



Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōhake

We know it can be tough to make ends meet at the best of times, let alone in a lockdown. If you need help getting food for you or your whānau, there are support services in Wellington ready to assist.

Are you able to pay for groceries and delivery, but unable to leave the house?

Contact the **Student Volunteer Army** and fill out a form to connect with a volunteer in your neighbourhood who can shop for you and deliver to your doorstep.
vuwsa.org.nz/sva or SVA@vuwsa.org.nz
021 256 9987

Sign up for the **Countdown Priority Delivery Service** (must meet one of the criteria for being a vulnerable health population) to be put at the front of the line for online grocery delivery.
0800 40 40 40

**Are you in need of a free food parcel?
Get in touch with one of these organisations.**

Wellington City Mission 0800 245 0900
or enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz

The Salvation Army (text 4114 your name, email, and post code)
or wellington.foodbank@salvationarmy.org.nz

St Vincent de Paul 04 389 7122
or info@vinnieswgtncity.org.nz



Q&A VIDEO NOW WITH CAPTIONS

Thank you for the great feedback on our webinar Q&A which now has captions added. Please keep the questions coming. You will find the link here <https://vimeo.com/415388585>

We have also been adding resources to the dedicated [community provider page on our website](#).

ALL CASES RECOVERED

It is the fourth day in a row where there have been no new cases nationally. We are also happy to announce that all cases in the greater Wellington region have recovered. There are still close contacts being monitored by Regional Public Health, but for now we are COVID-19 free. Great news and a testament to huge efforts around the region, but a timely reminder to be vigilant as our bubbles expand and people start travelling around the country.

THANK YOU

Thank you all once again for the valuable work you do. Stay safe. Be kind.

Rachel Haggerty

Community IMT