

20 April 2021

Dear PHO Chief Executive Officers

COVID-19 Immunisation Services through General Practice

This letter provides advice to all PHOs on the national approach that will be used to implement COVID-19 immunisation services through general practices.

The Government has announced a tiered COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan. Group 1 involves vaccinating border workers and their household contacts, and the rollout of those vaccinations is well underway. Progress is also being made in Group 2, which includes vaccinating the frontline health workforce and people living in high-risk places, with most DHBs having commenced, and some near completion. The rollout plan provides that, from May, people who are at risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 will be eligible to receive a vaccination, and the vaccine will be available to anyone who is aged 16 or over from July (however, the exact start dates depend on vaccine delivery schedules).

No matter where a DHB or provider provides COVID-19 immunisation services, Mana Manaaki must underpin the vaccination experience for every New Zealander.

DHBs are expected to achieve their weekly vaccination targets, which the Ministry of Health will publish. Additionally, DHBs are expected to provide seven-day-a-week access to vaccines in our communities, including public holidays. This, however, does not require all providers of COVID-19 immunisation services to be open seven days a week.

DHBs have already set up over 100 vaccination sites and more are planned. General practices will be an important part of the rollout of COVID-19 immunisation services. However, the current COVID-19 BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine requires very careful handling and compliance with specific cold-chain requirements. It has a very limited shelf life once thawed and has a specific set of guidelines that are more onerous than other vaccines. Therefore, it is unlikely all General Practices across the country will be able to participate. This will, however, be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The provision and funding of COVID-19 immunisation services will be in addition to any existing and funding. Funding to support COVID-19 immunisation services is on a fully funded basis and no additional patient co-payment is permitted.

The nationally set funding approach includes:

- Consideration of booking and recall, vaccine ordering and preparation, informed consent, administering the vaccine, documentation in CIR, checking, routine follow up including booking second dose.

- A standard Fee For Service (FFS) price of \$36.05 (ex GST) for each vaccination, which will increase to \$48.72 (ex GST) for vaccinations that are provided out of hours. These prices cannot be locally varied. A breakdown of these subsidies is included in Appendix 1.
- For the purposes of delivering the COVID-19 vaccine out of hours is defined as:
 - 8pm to 8am Mondays to Thursdays; or
 - 5pm Fridays to 8am Mondays; or
 - Any Public Holiday.
- The ability for DHBs to commission flexible and tailored services for local communities in order to achieve the most acceptable and effective vaccine delivery. Additional funding, over and above the FFS price, may be available, if necessary, to recognise the resources needed to deliver the vaccine to communities with high needs or access barriers to health services, including Māori, Pacific, deprived, disabled and rural communities.

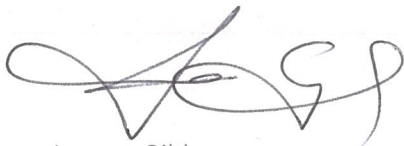
This funding approach only applies to the delivery of the current two dose BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine, and to the delivery of this vaccine to 31 December 2021.

Each DHB will locally commission these services from selected local providers. The work to identify and engage with potential COVID-19 immunisation service providers will commence in the coming days. If you have any questions, please contact your local DHB portfolio manager.

Yours sincerely



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Lead District Health Board Chief Executive for Primary Care and Public Health



Joanne Gibbs
National Director
COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme
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cc: Liz Stockley, CEO, GPNZ
 Dr Kate Baddock, Chair, NZMA
 GMs Planning and Funding, All DHBs
 Primary Care Portfolio Managers, All DHBs

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Vaccine Fee For Service Subsidy Breakdown (GST exclusive)*

Description (Per Dose)	Standard Pricing (\$)	Out of Hours Pricing (\$)
Unit level costs Cost related to the direct administration of the vaccination including preparation and delivery time and consumables	14.38	21.57
Batch level costs Costs related to the delivery of the service e.g. claiming, GP time, bookings, audit.	10.95	16.43
Facility level costs Facility level costs e.g. overheads such as rents, finance, operating expenses.	10.72	10.72
Total subsidy	36.05	48.72

* These subsidies only apply to the current two dose BioNTech/Pfizer, and to the delivery of the vaccine until 31 December 2021.