
All District Health Boards

29 March 2020

Dear PHO Chief Executives

Funding package to support primary care's response to COVID-19

The letter from Dr Nick Chamberlain and Keriana Brooking on 25 March 2020 provided some high-level information about the financial package that the Ministry of Health and the DHBs have developed to support community care services in their response to COVID-19.

In this letter we are pleased to provide further information about the direct financial support that will be provided for general practice. The funding components set out in this letter are in addition to the funding individual DHBs have made available to the general practices that are involved in the establishment of Community-Based Assessment Centres.

DHBs and the Ministry of Health recognise and value the critical role primary care is playing, and will continue to play, in the COVID-19 response.

The first component of the funding package is a one-off bulk payment of \$15 million, to be distributed to all general practices, to support them to meet the additional demands of COVID-19 including to establish capability to deliver virtual consultations.

The payment will be calculated for each general practice using ESU data as at 1 March 2020. The payment to each general practice will be the greater of the following amounts:

- an amount that is:
 - \$4.50 per high needs ESU (Māori, Pacific, Dep 5 and/or over 65s); and
 - \$1.50 for other ESUs; or
- \$2,500.

That means that each general practice will receive a minimum of \$2,500.

In addition, general practices with more than 50% high-need ESUs will receive an additional payment of \$5,000.

The funding for each general practice will be paid to you tomorrow, 30 March 2020, and should be in your bank account on 31 March 2020. These payments are in addition to all other payments made under the PHO Services Agreement. Each PHO is required to pass 100% of that funding to each general practice.

The second component of the funding package is payment for general practice based COVID-19 assessments. Funding of \$7.8 million has been allocated nationally for this purpose.

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The payment will be funded on a two-tier rate of \$120 for a simple assessment and \$250 for a full assessment. Service expectations for each assessment tier are set out in the appendix to this letter. The payment will be made on a fee for service basis. PHOs are to pass on 100% of the payment to each general practice. The details of the payment mechanism and process will need to be worked through by each DHB and PHO, however, this could include being included in local acute admissions avoidance service schedule where they exist for example.

DHBs and the Ministry will continue to work closely with primary care to support and sustain this critical role in COVID-19 response. This will be a key discussion item at PSAAP on 1 April 2020.

Can I please also thank our PHOs and general practice teams who are working under these extraordinary circumstances. General practices are the frontline of our health system. As the DHB CE lead for primary care (and as a fellow GP) I acknowledge and appreciate the work you are doing for our communities. The commitment you demonstrate for your patients is acknowledged and appreciated.

Your DHB Primary Care Portfolio Manager has been provided with the funding details for your General Practices. They will provide this information to you separately. Please do not hesitate to contact your DHB Primary Care Portfolio Manager if you have any questions about how the package will be delivered to your general practices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Chamberlain', written in a cursive style.

Dr Nick Chamberlain

Chief Executive, Northland DHB

Lead DHB CE for Primary Care and Public Health

cc: GMs Planning and Funding, All DHBs
Primary Care Portfolio Managers, All DHBs

Appendix

General Practice-Based Covid-19 Assessment: Two Tier Framework

Simple assessment

- No co-payment
- No clawback
- Patient meets the Ministry of Health's case definition (as it stands at any given point in time)
- Patient has mild symptoms
- Visual check and basic observations
- Swab, if indicated (eg, in a carpark)
- One or two people in PPE (PPE is funded separately)
- Patient sent home and provided with recommendation (eg, self-isolation)
- Patient advised of test results

Full assessment

- No co-payment
- No clawback
- Patient meets the Ministry of Health's case definition (as it stands at any given point in time)
- Patient has moderate or severe symptoms
- Chest exam in the practice
- Swab undertaken
- Patient may require a follow-up check (not separately claimed for)
- Practice decontamination undertaken
- One or two people in PPE (PPE is funded separately)
- Patient advised of test results