
FRIDAY 23 APRIL 2021

Uia te Rangi – Looking forward to the future! Medical colleges welcome health system reforms

The Council of Medical Colleges (CMC) welcomes the wide-ranging health system reforms announced by the Minister of Health, Hon Andrew Little, this week.

The reforms include replacing District Health Boards with a new Crown Entity, Health New Zealand, that will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the health system. A Māori Health Authority will also be established, with commissioning powers and the authority to work alongside the Ministry of Health on strategy and policy. Also, a new public health agency will be established within the Ministry of Health.

Dr John Bonning, Chair of CMC, said “we commend the government for establishing a Māori Health Authority with commissioning powers and a leadership role in developing strategy and policy for the whole sector. This is a necessary step to support equitable health outcomes for Māori and meet obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”

“Setting up a public health agency is also a good move – we’ve seen how important public health is during the COVID-19 pandemic. A public health agency will mean stronger public health leadership, better coordinated public health service delivery, and a focus on preventing ill-health, leading to better health outcomes for all.”

Dr Bonning also welcomes the establishment of Health New Zealand. “A centralised health agency offers big opportunities to strengthen the health system and reduce variation in care across Aotearoa New Zealand. It will enable a long-term, national approach to workforce planning, to make sure we train the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right locations.”

“We hope a centralised health agency will also enable more strategic investment in digital systems and infrastructure across the health system. Better access to patient information and health data between services has huge potential to reduce duplication and improve patient care.”

Dr Bonning says that the reforms are major. “There’s a lot of work ahead of the sector. We know one of the first pieces of work will be designing a New Zealand Health Charter to set the culture for the new system. Te Tiriti o Waitangi and cultural safety will need to be at the heart of the Charter, and CMC is looking forward to working closely with government on this.”

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About the Council of Medical Colleges (CMC) in Aotearoa New Zealand

The CMC represents fifteen Medical Colleges which provide support to over 9000 medical practitioners working in a range of specialties in the New Zealand health system.

To arrange an interview with Dr Bonning, contact:

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