

20 January 2012

Dear Health Workforce New Zealand Stakeholder

Workforce Strategy for the Health and Disability Sector

You will most likely be aware that Health Workforce New Zealand (HWNZ) has been given the responsibility to develop a workforce strategy for the health and disability support sector. This work has been initiated by the State Services Commission (SSC) as part of a government-wide initiative to ensure departments and Ministry's have robust strategies in place to manage New Zealand's publicly funded services.

The reason for this letter is to clarify the purpose, process and timing of this work and to update you on progress and next steps.

The current strategy is a companion document to a number of other key documents being prepared by the Ministry of Health for Ministers, including Health's Four Year Budget Plan. It is pitched at a high level and describes for Ministers our organisational plans to manage workforce needs and cost pressures in a clear and achievable way. Its principal focus is the publicly employed workforce across the health system, including those working in community and hospital settings, and both regulated and unregulated workers.

To inform the draft strategy we prepared an initial "concept note" which was circulated to the District Health Boards and health sector unions for comment. There was general endorsement of the "direction of travel" signalled in the document, and agreement that there needed to be a clear action plan to ensure any changes to workforce configuration and deployment would not compromise DHBs ability to deliver services.

We also drew heavily on the direction, planning and goals for the health and disability support workforce that have been developed by HWNZ over the past couple of years in consultation with the sector, including the considerable expertise, insights and recommendations offered through the various clinician-led workforce service reviews/service forecasts.

The concept note was then reframed in response to feedback from DHBs, advice from the SSC and Treasury, and guidance from the Ministry's executive leadership team. The current draft also acknowledges that over half of New Zealand's health workforce is privately employed, and that the health workforce system has a number of different components and complexities compared to other workforce systems.

After the current high level document is submitted to Ministers and SSC at the end of January 2012, we propose the development of a broader and more comprehensive strategy and implementation plan in consultation with the sector. This will be a critical document that directly informs our planning for the workforce. The timeframe for this work is yet to be determined but we will keep you informed as this emerges.



I have had direct communication with, and correspondence from, a few organisations that have expressed concern about the extent of stakeholder involvement in the current strategy, and have responded separately to those letters. I trust this letter has provided some reassurance about HWNZ's ongoing commitment to engage with the sector and to properly consult on a comprehensive health and disability support workforce strategy and resulting action plan.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need further clarification on any of the above. I look forward to continuing a constructive working relationship with you throughout the year.

Yours sincerely



Brenda Wraight
Director
Health Workforce New Zealand

