

## Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 20 March 2020



**In this issue:** Covid-19 – let us know what's happening in your practice • November dates announced for rescheduled 2020 conference • Coronavirus: 70 University of Auckland medical students called back to New Zealand and much more...



Angel Flight NZ is a charity funded by Rotary, Private and Corporate donations.



New Zealand Office Supplies is the preferred supplier to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network. Take advantage of Network practice member benefits with New Zealand Office Supplies.



The Network's health promotion partner.

### Covid-19 – let us know what's happening in your practice

With the Covid-19 pandemic currently sweeping the globe and the number of cases in New Zealand steadily increasing, these are undoubtedly trying times for us all. The Board, management and staff at the Network acknowledge the extra workload, stress and personal commitment for you and your teams.

This is on top of what is already a busy rural general practice workload. The Network is keen to hear of any issues relating to your response to Covid-19 and your day to day rural general practice service delivery that you might be experiencing and is keen to help where we can.

If you have any issues or concerns please contact Network Deputy Chief Executive Linda Reynolds on 021 547 161, or email [linda@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:linda@rgpn.org.nz); or for any recruitment or assistance-related enquiries please contact NZLocums Team Leader Jacinta Sanders on 021 840 756, or email [jacinta@nzlocums.com](mailto:jacinta@nzlocums.com)

The Ministry of Health has a dedicated Covid-19 [website](#).  
The Royal New Zealand College of GPs also has dedicated resources available on their [website](#).

### November dates announced for rescheduled 2020 conference

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 the difficult decision was taken to postpone the Asia Pacific Region WONCA conference scheduled for Auckland's Aotea Centre at the end of April this year.

We are pleased to confirm that we have secured a new date for a conference: **Thursday, November 5 to Saturday, November 7, 2020.**

The conference will be held at the same venue (Aotea Centre, Auckland) and as planned co-hosted by the Royal New Zealand College of GPs, the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network and Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa - Māori Medical Practitioners Association.

Keep watching this newsletter or the NZRGP website for updates.

## COVID-19 IN THE MEDIA

### Coronavirus: Government shuts borders to all but citizens and residents

New Zealand has closed its borders to everyone but citizens and residents in an attempt to stop the spread of coronavirus. (Stuff)

The ban applied to planes boarding after 11.59pm on Thursday - any planes in the air already would not be impacted.

[Read more](#)

### Covid-19 livestream: No indoor gatherings of 100+ people - govt

The government is extending its mass gathering policy to cancel indoor events with 100 or more people, the Health Minister David Clark has confirmed. (RNZ)

The new measures do not apply to workplaces, schools, supermarkets or public transport.

Dr Clark said the new measures were needed to ensure there was no community outbreak of the Covid-19 in New Zealand.

[Read more](#)

### Restrictions to New Zealand's supply of drugs likely as coronavirus fears grow

New Zealand's drug buying agency Pharmac says disruptions to the supply of some medicines are inevitable with the outbreak of coronavirus. (NZ Herald)

"Quarantines may slow or halt activities in manufacturing plants or they may impact transportation and ports," Pharmac's director of operations Lisa Williams told the Herald.

[Read more](#)

### Coronavirus: Disease has mutated into two strains - one more aggressive, say scientists

Scientists claim the new coronavirus has mutated into two strains, with one being more aggressive than the other. (NZ Herald)

Researchers at Peking University's School of Life Sciences and the Institut Pasteur of Shanghai discovered that the virus has evolved into two major lineages - which have been branded "L" and "S" types.

[Read more](#)

### Disruption to put pressure on mental health services

Coronavirus-related disruption will also add to growing pressures on New Zealand's mental health system, Corinda Taylor warns. (ODT)

Mrs Taylor, of the Life Matters Suicide Prevention Trust, said a drop-in economic activity, partly linked to restrictions on tourist travel by air and cruise ships, would mean tough times for some employees and employers.

[Read more](#)

### Coronavirus: 70 University of Auckland medical students called back to New Zealand

About 70 University of Auckland medical students posted overseas are being called back home – an unprecedented step amid the global spread of Covid-19. (NZ Herald)

The university says another 150 students could also be affected if its suspension stays in place for the rest of the academic year.

[Read more](#)

### Coronavirus: New Zealand's GPs 'definitely' trained to cope with the virus

Kiwi doctors are "definitely" up to dealing with the coronavirus, specialists say. (Stuff)

This comes after a poll found just four in 10 people (39 per cent) thought New Zealand's doctors were adequately trained to deal with Covid-19.

[Read more](#)

### Coronavirus: Doctors and patients turn to telemedicine in wake of outbreak

The man had recently travelled, including a brief stop in Tokyo. He had a fever and cough about a week ago but was now feeling fine. (NZ Herald)

He called the virtual medical line set up by Rush University Medical Centre in Chicago recently to help screen patients for coronavirus.

[Read more](#)

### 'Foot shake' lights up social media following WHO coronavirus advice

Goodbye, handshake. Hello, foot-shake. (Stuff)

After the World Health Organisation advised people to stop shaking hands and suggested a 'foot-shake' alternative amid fears of spreading coronavirus, the new trend has lit up social media.

[Read more](#)

## AWARDS

### Kuemu GP wins General Practitioner of the Year Award at inaugural NZ Primary Health Care Awards



Dr John Elliott has been a GP in Kumeu for 20 years. Over that time, he has demonstrated a work ethic and dedication to the job that stands in the finest tradition of both his family and New Zealand general practice. Impeccable clinical standards coupled with strong and compassionate interpersonal skills have made him highly respected and greatly loved by his patients. He has provided unlimited availability in palliative care and to many complex institutionalised community mental health patients under his care. Meanwhile, an NZRGP designed and driven programme to encourage rural school students to take up rural health careers was one of two finalists in the Research and Education category. The winner was Osteoarthritis – reducing the disease burden, Longhurst Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Christchurch.

Pictured (from left to right) at the February 29 Awards in Auckland are Wilson Mitchell (University of Otago), Isaac Teng (University of Auckland), Holly Barclay (University of Otago), Esther Maxim (NZRGP), Dr Fiona Bolden (NZRGP Committee Chair), Anna Clark (DGG Health Workforce, MOH) and Jacinta Sanders (NZLocums).

To read the winners stories click [HERE](#).

### Four more docs placed in rural practices



Four doctors from countries including the UK, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands attended NZLocums Orientation for overseas trained GPs and Practice Nurses held in Wellington from 2 – 4 March.

The three-day Orientation course introduced them to New Zealand's health system and numerous important aspects of living and working in New Zealand including cultural induction and practical MedTech training.

Pictured from left to right: Dr Jack Dascalu, Dr Kelly Weir, Dr Herman Eshuis and Dr John Fishwick. NZLocums' Orientation course is tailor-made for internationally trained GPs and Practice Nurses. The course is endorsed by the Royal New Zealand College of GPs up to 18.5 credits CME.

Contact Ayumi today for more information, email: [ayumi@nzlocums.com](mailto:ayumi@nzlocums.com) or visit [www.nzlocums.com](http://www.nzlocums.com)

## News

### New nursing degree to address need for more Māori health workers

The Māori nursing population has remained static for 40 years, but a new Māori nursing degree in Auckland hopes to change that. (RNZ)

Manukau Institute of Technology recently launched Te Tohu Paetahi Tikanga Rangatira a Tapuhi, a nursing degree with a particular focus on Māori health, tikanga and te reo.

[Read more](#)

### Calls for equal Māori representation in new cancer agency

A Māori health leader is calling for equal representation within the new cancer agency but wants Māori to decide what that looks like for themselves. (RNZ)

The government announced it would establish a national [Cancer Control Agency](#) by December as part of its 10-year strategy, which also includes achieving cancer survival equity by 2030.

[Read more](#)

### Life-extending breast cancer drug Ibrance to be fully funded from April

A life-prolonging drug is being fully funded for New Zealanders with advanced (metastatic) breast cancer, saving patients thousands of dollars and ultimately giving them more time. (Stuff)

Pharmac announced it was funding Ibrance ([palbociclib](#)) from April 1. Until now, many of those living with [advanced breast](#) cancer had to pay about \$6000 for a month's supply of the drug.

[Read more](#)

## NZ Doctor stories – log-in required

### After-hours pressure grows in north Waikato as riverside towns 'swallowed up'

Population growth is compounding problems for north Waikato residents in need of after-hours medical care, but local practices differ on how to solve the problem.

The absence of on-call local GPs and a nearby after-hours clinic means residents of Huntly, Taupiri, Horotiu and Ngaruawahia must trek to Hamilton for after-hours treatment at Hamilton's Anglesea Medical. Ngaruawahia GP Priyen Naidoo says.

[Read more](#)

### College announces new medal to honour fellow killed in mosque shootings

A new annual medal has been announced by the RNZCGP to honour fellow of the College's Division of Rural Hospital Medicine, heart doctor and rural hospital consultant Amjad Hamid who died in the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks.

Born in Palestine, Dr Hamid was 57 and had lived in Christchurch for 23 years with his wife and family. He had been commuting to Hawera Hospital for three years where he worked as a rural hospital consultant.

[Read more](#)

### Coronavirus: Hospitals planning to cancel operations if needed

Hospitals are planning to cancel operations and convert theatres to intensive care units if needed to keep people alive in a COVID-19 outbreak. There are 221 ventilators in the country - the machines that keep people breathing if they need help.

[Read more](#)

### Virtual care could protect patients and staff from COVID-19

COVID-19 could be the disruptor that encourages more practices to take up virtual consultations, says Takapuna GP and Comprehensive Care PHO chair Heidi MacRae.

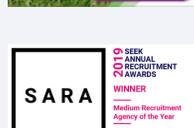
Until now, the Medplus clinic she co-founded has used the service exclusively for the management of long-term conditions, but now encourages anyone worried about their infection status to request a virtual consultation. It will not only reduce the patient's waiting time, says Dr MacRae, it will reduce any risk to other patients and staff.

[Read more](#)

### Not a member? Join the Network!

The Network is the only nationwide membership-based organisation in New Zealand representing the interests of rural general practice.

Visit our [website](#) for online information and an online application form or contact Rob Olsen on 021 472 556.



### Testimonial

*"NZLocums has been instrumental in allowing me to fulfill my dream of relocating to New Zealand and working as a GP here. They offered me guidance from the earliest stages till the Orientation before starting work. I had a specific contact in NZLocums who helped at every stage and was very responsive to any queries I had. The Orientation material and programme were invaluable in getting me familiar with the workings of the NZ health system. I cannot thank them enough."*

Dr Nicole Yuen, Singapore



### Open your New Zealand bank account

The Network's official banking partner.

## TELL US YOUR STORY

We are looking for health sector-related stories from around rural New Zealand. People, places, achievements and challenges. If you have a good yarn to tell contact Network communications manager Rob Olsen, email [rob@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:rob@rgpn.org.nz) or 021 472 556.