

## Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 24 April 2020



**In this issue:** Withheld millions for General Practice will cause cutbacks (RNZ) • GPs have funding pulled just as they're bracing for 'tsunami' post-lockdown • Non-payment puts practice at risk: GP • Coronavirus: GPs fear for jobs, midwives feel ignored from Government support much more...



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The Network's health promotion partner.

## NETWORK IN THE MEDIA

### Rural GP Network secures more support for rural general practice

The New Zealand Rural General Practice Network has brokered an agreement with the Ministry of Health to extend locum support to keep vulnerable rural general practices operating as they come under mounting pressure as a result of Covid-19.

NZRGPN Chief Executive, Dalton Kelly, said with many surgeries cancelled and urban clinics running significantly reduced services, there are urban healthcare professionals with insufficient work. At the same time, the chronic shortage of healthcare professionals in rural communities remains and has been exacerbated by Covid-19.

[Read the media statement](#)

Chairperson Dr Fiona Bolden Rural News: [Is rural health being short-changed?](#)

### Sign the petition to "Save Sounds Air"

The Network is urging its members to sign the "Save Sounds Air" petition that has so far collected more than 21,000 signatures. The Network believes the regional airline is a vital link to many rural communities and that it should receive Government funding to help avoid it going into receivership.

Sounds Air provided links such as Blenheim to Wellington, Blenheim to Paraparaumu, Blenheim to Christchurch, Wellington to Westport, Wellington to Taupo and Wellington to Nelson. The COVID-19 crisis has seen services cut back and its future put in doubt.

The Government established a \$600 million aviation sector relief package to provide financial support for Airways who have lost significant revenue due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. To date, Sounds Air has been denied any financial support.

The [petition](#) calls on the Government to support Sounds Air through its aviation sector relief package. It was launched by Kaikōura National MP Stuart Smith earlier this week.

Sign the petition [HERE](#).

## COVID-19 NEWS

All stories are current at the time of publication.

### Withheld millions for General Practice will cause cutbacks (RNZ)

Dr Kate Baddock, Chair of the Medical Association talks to Kathryn Ryan about a government promise of a further \$22 million dollars in Covid-19 funding that's been withheld, and the possibility some practices will close and others are facing cutting back medical staff. Listen [HERE](#), or [read Covid-19: GPs say promised government funding not received](#)

### GPs have funding pulled just as they're bracing for 'tsunami' post-lockdown

Funding to desperate general practices for the second half of lockdown has been blocked by the Government. (NewsTalkZB)

It comes as GPs brace for a "tsunami" of patients who'd put off seeing a doctor and pulling the rug on the payment could see some practices financially compromised, says the primary care sector.

[Read more.](#)

### Non-payment puts practice at risk: GP

A Cromwell GP says his business is at risk after the Government ruled against a second tranche of funding to bolster general practices in the wake of Covid-19. (ODT)

The decision represents a U-turn from what the Government initially announced for GPs, particularly rural ones, on April 8.

[Read more.](#)

### Coronavirus: GPs fear for jobs, midwives feel ignored from Government support

Community healthcare providers say they are being short-changed during the COVID-19 crisis, and it'll be services that suffer. (Newshub)

The Medical Association says GPs may lose their jobs, while the College of Midwives says community-based midwives have been ignored altogether when it comes to additional support.

[Read more.](#)

### Big queues for flu vaccine

A Mosgiel doctor says the "crazy" reaction to the arrival of a batch of flu vaccines at his medical centre recently showed how anxious people were about Covid-19. (ODT)

Supplies of the flu vaccine had been in short supply across the country since the first batches were distributed. Subsequent dispatches had been snapped up and many people and GPs were crying out for more.

[Read more.](#)

AND read NZ Herald Covid 19 coronavirus: [GPs have funding pulled just as they're bracing for the 'tsunami' after the lockdown](#)

### The NZ doctor aboard the cruise ship with more than 100 Covid-19 cases

It would be anyone's worst nightmare: being stuck on a cruise ship, confined to your cabin, because more than half of the people on board have Covid-19. (RNZ)

But that was the situation Hawke's Bay-based Jeffrey Green was facing on the Greg Mortimer, as the expedition doctor for the cruise around South Georgia and Antarctica.

[Read more.](#)

### 'Decades of neglect' of the health system have caused Covid-19 breakdown issues

Some of those on the health frontline say they are near breaking point as representatives laid bare their frustrations with the response to the Covid-19 crisis before the Epidemic Response Committee. (NZ Herald)

General practices, which run hand-to-mouth operations, are on their knees while dental surgeries are in crisis due to a lack of funding and an inability to treat people during the lockdown.

[Read more.](#)

### Covid 19 coronavirus: Dr Lance O'Sullivan admits lockdown breach

A Northland doctor and former New Zealander of the Year has admitted to flouting lockdown rules to go kayaking. (NZ Herald)

Lance O'Sullivan, who earlier this month [blasted Kaitiaki's lockdown efforts as "a joke"](#), admitted the breach in a recent Facebook post.

[Read more.](#)

## NZ Doctor stories – log-in required

### COVID-swabbing, roadblocks, extra doctors – isolated communities fight virus

With community roadblocks, extra doctors and its own swabbing centre, the East Coast has done its utmost to prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic.

So far, just four cases of the illness have been reported in the Tairāwhiti health district, which includes the East Coast.

[Read more](#)

### Frontline practices feel slapped in face by Cabinet decision to 'renege' on relief funding

General practices on the front line in the COVID-19 crisis are feeling let down, angry and taken for granted after the Government pulled the plug on the second \$22 million instalment of lockdown relief funding.

GP leaders are fighting back by urgently seeking financial data from general practices to support a further case to the Cabinet to show low cashflows are putting practices and patient health at risk

[Read the media release.](#)

### Health minister 'receptive' in crisis talks over lockdown top-up for general practice

Fears the health system won't cope properly with a post-epidemic surge of illness are being fuelled by the Government's withholding the \$11 million-a-week COVID top-up from general practice. General practice leaders continue to highlight, including at Parliament's epidemic response committee, the lockdown financial crisis for general practice and the expected surge throughout the whole system afterwards from pent-up health need.

[Read more](#)

## Links

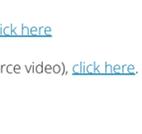
- Ministry of Health online bulletins, click [here](#).
- The Ministry of Health website has a dedicated COVID-19 [website](#).
- The Royal New Zealand College of GPs has dedicated resources on their [website](#).
- ACC provider updates COVID-19 click [here](#).
- Leaning on Fence Posts, Otago University rural research blog, click [here](#).
- Health Workforce New Zealand stakeholder bulletin, click [here](#).
- Mobile Health news, click [here](#).
- Medline (USA rural health) click [here](#).
- Death Documents Project (Ministry of Health), click [here](#).
- Health Promotion Agency (HPA) SunSmart campaign, [Click here](#)
- Health Quality & Safety Commission Implicit Bias (resource video), [click here](#).

### New patient resources for skin cancer

Most skin cancers are preventable. And if detected early, most can be successfully treated.

The resources can help you promote early detection to your patients

To order go to [SunSmart.org.nz](#)



### 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 additional 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 programme were invaluable in getting me familiar with the workings of the NZ health system. I cannot thank them enough."*

Dr Nicole Yuen, Singapore



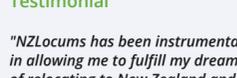
Looking for a GP?



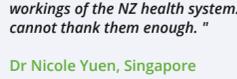
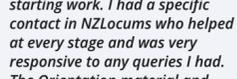
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## TELL US YOUR COVID-19 STORY

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.