

Workforce Taskforce Update

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Workforce Development Plan focused on transformational change underway

Transformational change is required over the next 10 years to grow our health workforce sustainably and equitably in line with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This year a key focus of the Taskforce and the six professional working groups is to develop a long-term integrated national plan to address workforce pressures. The plan will focus on workforce modelling and the whole-of-system changes needed to attract, educate and train as well as retain our health workforce.

It will address the challenges and opportunities ahead to ensure we have a sufficient workforce (numbers, roles and distribution), including but not limited to:

- Targeted, long-term initiatives to increase Māori, Pacific and disabled people | tāngata whaikaha health workers
- Embedding cultural safety at all touch points of training and employment
- Remove education, supervision, training and registration barriers and immigration restrictions
- Strengthening primary, rural, community and virtual care
- Improving health infrastructure – such as data collection and analysis, and clinical placement systems - to better manage pipeline growth

The plan will align with Manatū Hauora – the Ministry of Health’s [Health Workforce Strategy](#), which looks at the regulatory and legislative shifts required. We’ll work closely with our workforce groups, partners in education, the wider health sector and other social care sectors. Both the Ministry’s plan and the Workforce Development Plan are expected to be complete towards the end of 2023.

Development of Career Pathways

The future of career pathways is having a modular approach to learning to ensure we are able to develop a flexible future workforce. This will also support the changing nature of careers where having multiple professions/careers becoming the new normal. This creates an exciting opportunity to work with key sector partners to develop this future state. The Kaiāwhina workforce will be a starting point with the development of a career framework.

Working with our education partners – Toitu te Wairoa and Te Pukenga – we are looking at identifying the current credentials to start to build this framework. This work is in its initial stages given the large number of credentials in existence and the need to bring these into a framework. Alongside this we are framing up our strategic partnership with the Tertiary Education Commission to develop a joint approach to health education.

Pathways open for overseas trained doctors

Two new pilot programmes are underway to support 20 overseas-trained doctors from non-comparable health systems in their path to roles as junior doctors in New Zealand.

Ten doctors were welcomed onto Whenua Pupuke Clinical Skills Centre at Auckland’s North Shore Hospital earlier this week as part of a 19-week bridging programme to support these skilled professionals adjust to life in the New Zealand health sector. The bridging programme is designed to progressively introduce programme participants to the roles and responsibilities of a junior doctor in a clinical setting and therefore support future practice in New Zealand.



This follows the commencement of another pilot running in the Waikato, which commenced at the start of the year supporting another 10 doctors to complete a two-year internship, focused on community care. These doctors will undertake one quarter of their training programme for registration in a hospital, and three quarters in primary care. The Programme targets those who wish to go on and practice in primary care and includes a placement in a rural setting.

Interim Workforce Lead, Ailsa Clair said each pilot is a small but important step to increase the number of doctors in New Zealand and to build a long-term sustainable workforce.

*Pictured from left to right: **Back row:** Joanna Helsby (Medical Education Fellow), Laura Chapman (Waitematā District Director of Clinical Training), Mandeep Kaur, Jonathan Christiansen (Waitematā District Chief Medical Officer), Lorena Statkiewich and Li Wang
Middle Row: Jill Raga-Pardo, Taslim Shatu, Gulzarin Mall and Farhana Islam. **Front row:** Garima Malik, Pallavi Kurikyala and Kanchana Wijewickrama*

“We know our health workforce has been under significant pressure that has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and growing workforce shortages worldwide. These programmes help to get doctors into our health workforce quickly while ensuring we maintain high standards of care and support to the hospitals and community settings that train them.

“While it’s not a solution on its own, it is pleasing to see both of these programmes now underway. Along with several other initiatives, it will help to bring more doctors into the workforce to address critical staffing shortages,” Mrs Clair said.

“We also remain focussed on other initiatives underway to grow our health workforce domestically and this work will continue to be a priority.”

If successful, the pilots will open to further intakes to help increase the number of doctors over the next few years.

To be accepted into the pilot programmes, doctors must have passed their New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX) in the last five years.

The programmes are part of a suite of initiatives [announced](#) last year by the Health Minister focused on boosting the health workforce by developing more responsive training pathways, increasing attraction and recruitment into the sector, and improving immigration processes.

More information is available on the Te Whatu Ora website: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/whats-happening/work-underway/workforce-initiatives/>

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Primary Care pilot group:

Pictured: Back row: Carol Stevenson (NZREX Pilot Education Manager), Kanna Goundar, Dr Wayne de Beer (Director of Clinical Training)

Front row: Carlos Confort Campos, Khansaa Kurkchi, Aahil Haldar Neer, Vimla Govender

Other work underway to grow our GP workforce:

- We're increasing the number of GPs trained a year to 300 by 2026 with a focus on more Māori and Pacific GPs.
- New funding from 2024 will see an increase in salaries for year one GP trainees, an increase in funding for teacher supervisors and a hosting fee for general practices who host 12-week community training modules for post graduate trainees.
- We're establishing a rural locum coordination service in the first half of this year to help address the challenges rural hospitals face maintaining their medical workforce.

Visit <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-the-health-sector/overseas-doctors/> for more information about the NZREX programmes

Consultation: Improving the student placement system

The taskforce is focused on improving the system we use to place students into training to help increase the size and diversity of our workforce. The current approach to organising clinical placements varies across education and training providers, is often manual, and opportunities for placements can be missed. It can also inadvertently prioritise those with fewer commitments (such as whānau or employment) and pre-existing networks.

Developing a new student placement system

A better placement system will allow more students to enrol in health-related courses, and will help us grow the skilled, sustainable, diverse and responsive health workforce Aotearoa needs. That's why Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora are working with the education sector and health training providers to develop a nationally designed, regionally coordinated student placement system.

Where we are at with the project

We are analysing existing student placement systems through a survey, early engagement, and other research, which we expect to complete end of March 2023. This analysis will inform the development of several proposed digital solutions, which we will consult on. Once we have a preferred option, towards the second half of 2023, we will develop a business case for approval.

Have your say

If you are involved in the health student placement system – as an education provider or in the health system itself – we want to hear your views on how the system works. Please email placementmodel@health.govt.nz if you would like to participate in a focus group or with any questions, suggestions, or feedback. More information: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/whats-happening/consultations/a-new-system-for-student-placements/>

Anaesthetic technician career inspired by nursing group's HCA learn and earn programme

Earn while you learn' programmes are one of the initiatives the Workforce Taskforce and working groups are focused on to inspire health careers and grow a more sustainable and equitable workforce.

Co-lead for the Nursing Working Group and Chief Nursing Officer at Te Toka Tumai Auckland, Margaret Dotchin says the Health Care Assistant (HCA) Earn and Learn programme set up there in 2021 is a great example of how these programmes bring long-term benefits to our workforce.

Those on the programme join the hospital as HCAs working on the wards, being paid and supported, while studying for their level 3 qualification in health and wellbeing.

"The programme takes less than a year to complete and participants walk away as qualified HCAs with a guaranteed job with us at the end. That's a win in itself with our HCAs playing a vital role caring for patients and their whānau as well as supporting our clinical teams," says Margaret.

"But the programme is also inspiring a new generation of nurses and other healthcare workers, such as cardiac physiologists and anaesthetic technicians."

Namrata Chand is one of the programme's recent graduates and many success stories.

Namrata joined the HCA Earn and Learn Programme as part of the Starship Perioperative team. Since completing the programme in November last year, Namrata has begun her anaesthetic technician training working in Starship's theatres team.

Namrata, originally from Fiji, explains that Starship is the last place she envisioned herself working.

"When I was 11 years old, I was diagnosed with an atrial septal defect – which is a type of heart defect - and had open heart surgery at Starship to repair it," says Namrata. "After that I just wanted to stay away from hospitals."

"During the COVID-19 pandemic I got a job working in the kitchen and delivering meals to wards 65 and 67 at Auckland City Hospital."

"Through visiting the wards to deliver meals, I became really intrigued by the healthcare teams and the care patients received."

"I found out about the HCA Earn and Learn programme through talking to the ward clerks and decided to give it a go."

The HCA Earn and Learn programme has enabled Namrata to discover her passion and pursue a career in health.

"At the end of last year, I applied and was accepted into AUT's Bachelor of Health Science in Perioperative Practice. I'm really excited about going to uni," she says.

When asked what advice she'd give anyone considering signing up for the HCA Earn and Learn programme, her advice is clear: "Go for it! You'll have opportunities opening up left right and centre. I did doubt myself but here I am."

Congrats Namrata and all the best for your studies!



Other ways we are growing our nursing workforce:

- Funding of up to \$5,000 per applicant for New Zealand-based nurses to return to practice or for IQNs who are NZ citizens or residents currently working as Health Care Assistants/Support workers through the Return to Nursing fund. In rounds 1 and 2, 225 applications have been approved and another round is underway.
- The Internationally Qualified Nurses (IQNs) Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) Fund offers up to \$10,000 to help reduce costs for IQNs required to complete a CAP to become registered to work as a nurse in NZ.
- We have increased the number of funded places on the Nurse Practitioner Training Programme from 50 to 80 in the 2023 academic year and this will increase to 100 funded places in 2024.
- The 2022 voluntary bonding scheme intake, which offers financial incentives to newly qualified health professionals to work in the communities and specialities that need them most, was the biggest in more than a decade with 534 applicants. Registered nurses and enrolled nurses represented almost three quarters of the intake.
- Hauora Māori Scholarships went out in 2022 to support 756 in professional training – 154 of these are nurses (240 medicine, 56 midwifery and 28 dentistry).

Northland programme targets rural careers and cultural competency

A new rural immersion programme focused on encouraging students to consider a career in rural health and foster cultural competency has been launched in Hokianga, Northland this year.

The live-in, five-week 'Te Takapau Wānanga Programme' - run by Hauora Hokianga in partnership with the University of Auckland and funded by Te Whatu Ora - sees around 10 students each intake complete clinical placements in the mid-North while completing workshops focused on rural health, hauora Māori and interprofessional education.

This year there will be seven intakes, mixing students from different disciplines (including medical, pharmacy, nursing, physiotherapy, oral health, health promotion and the non-regulated workforce).

Clair Bosworth, Manager, Workforce Commissioning attended the pōwhiri and said "It is great to see initiatives like these being stood up which support the direction of the workforce taskforce to increase the number of graduates who will work in our rural communities. The programme will give students an opportunity to really immerse themselves in the culture of the Hokianga community and encourage them to consider careers in rural health."



"It was really special to attend the launch and to hear the kōrero about how resilient the community is and how there is still much to be done," Clair said.

"The medical workforce and the taskforce are focused on addressing key issues such as rural workforce shortages and disparities as well as cultural competency and responsiveness. It's really encouraging to see programmes such as this with its deep connection with Te Ao Māori and Rongoā [Māori medicine], which challenge the status quo and reimagine what our workforce looks like," she said.

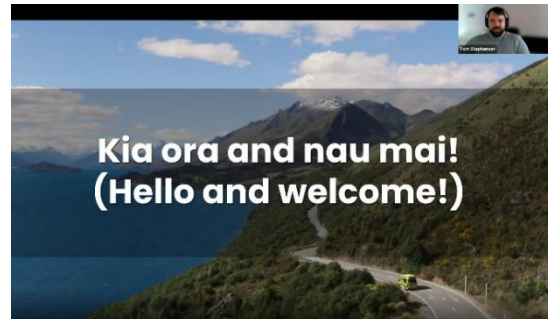
Looking outside our borders to help grow the workforce

While focused on growing our health workforce in Aotearoa, we also need to increase the number of overseas workers we recruit to ease workforce pressures in the coming years.

Somewhere different campaign

We are encouraged by the interest to date from our international recruitment campaign [somewhere different.co.nz](https://somerheredifferent.co.nz) which has had over 800 expressions of interest so far, and over 100 qualified workers have been referred to Te Whatu Ora districts to help find them suitable roles.

We've also had our first accepted job offer as a result of the campaign – a nurse who will be based in Canterbury. This is fantastic achievement considering the campaign has only been in market for 3 months, and it takes workers anywhere from 8 months to 2 years to complete the international recruitment process from start to finish. Offering somebody employment at such an early stage is encouraging, and we look forward to welcoming our new nurse to their home very soon.



475 internationally based health workers have also registered for our [webinars](#), which started last month to support the campaign and those who want to move here in collaboration with Immigration NZ and multiple Responsible Authorities.

Each webinar is tailored to a specific workforce group and offers practical advice and support on the immigration and registration processes.

To view our previous webinars, visit the [webinar section of the campaign page](#).

Kiwi Health Jobs nursing campaigns

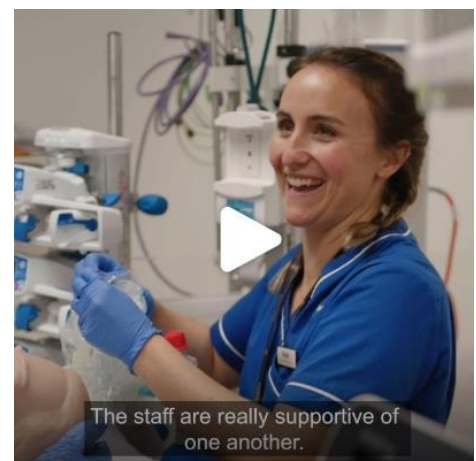
[Kiwi Health Jobs](#) (KHJ) has attracted over 630 applications for nurses abroad who want to move to New Zealand, and 33 additional nurses have been employed (as at 27 February 2023).

This result is positive, given there are many decisions and steps candidates need to make before emigrating. We look forward to welcoming more highly skilled nurses to New Zealand over the coming months.

The KHJ team have also been focused on attracting Critical Care Nurses. Check out our recent [video](#) on YouTube (2.24s) profiling nurses from across the motu who are enjoying Aotearoa's career and lifestyle opportunities. Thanks to those nurses who shared their stories, and the teams who helped with filming.

If you have friends or whānau overseas who are healthcare workers and looking to return or move to New Zealand, please tell them about the services we have to help them:

- Visit www.kiwihealthjobs.com to express an interest in health roles we have around the country
- Check out [somewhere different.co.nz](https://somerheredifferent.co.nz) to register their details, get guidance on visa options, access recruitment expertise, support with relocation and settlement.



Working groups update

The Workforce Taskforce established six professional working groups that are focused on the pipeline for our key health professions, including how we recruit, develop and retain our staff in a health career.

Each of these groups – Nursing; Midwifery; Medical; Kaiāwhina; Allied Health, Technical & Scientific; and Clerical and General Management – are undertaking workforce modelling to inform the Workforce Development Plan and the next round of initiatives. While some of these groups were already well established, such as the Nursing Pipeline Group, others have had to establish themselves and are making great progress.

Allied Health, Technical & Scientific Working Group

The Allied Health, Scientific & Technical Working Group, co-lead by Jamaine Fraser (Interim Principal Advisor, Workforce, Te Aka Whai Ora) and Sue Waters (Chief Health Professions Officer, Te Whatu Ora Te Toka Tumai, Auckland) have to date established 20 profession steering groups that will feed into the National Workforce Development Plan and make recommendations to the National Workforce Taskforce for a more sustainable workforce pipeline to support the local growth of these professions as well as collective recommendations across Allied Health professions to increase the visibility of and interest in these professional pathways. Each of the steering groups will engage with a range of relevant stakeholders, including unions and key sector groups throughout their mahi.

The initial profession steering groups are anaesthetic technicians, sonographers, cardiac & clinical physiologists, medical imaging technologists, radiation therapists, oral health therapists, laboratory technicians and scientists, physiotherapists, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, paramedics, optometrists, pharmacists, podiatrists & orthotists, psychologist, audiologists and social workers.

Midwifery

The Midwifery Steering Group, currently co-led by Julie Patterson (Director, Women's Health, Te Whatu Ora Toka Tumai, Auckland) and Michelle Vincent (as interim Co-Chair until a Te Aka Whai Ora lead is appointed) is now up and running. At the first meeting of the Steering Group in February, they canvassed current issues and possible initiatives as well as work in progress across the sector.

The group is meeting again in early March. A broad range of options is being explored to extend and develop new programmes to grow the workforce.

Ailsa Claire

Jade Sewell

**Taskforce Chair/Interim Workforce Lead
Te Whatu Ora**

**Taskforce Chair/Interim Workforce
Commissioning Lead
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