

2022-03/18-8

18 March 2022

## PHARMAC

By email: [vaccines@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:vaccines@pharmac.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe



### Proposal to widen access to the influenza vaccine

Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa, New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to comment on PHARMAC's proposal to widen access to the influenza vaccine.

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing 55,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment matters. NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvements of the health status and outcomes for all Aotearoa New Zealanders through influencing health, employment, and social policy development.

Furthermore, we share the intent of the Ministry of Health's definition of equity which equally applies to NZNO work across professional, industrial and member activities.

NZNO notes this proposal would mean that approximately 39,000 more Māori and Pacific peoples from 55 to 64 years of age, who are not already eligible for funded influenza vaccine through current access criteria, would be able to receive the funded influenza vaccine. NZNO also has an expectation that this action will reduce access barriers for others who are already eligible but may not be able to confirm their eligibility.

NZNO acknowledges that widening access may create a short-term increase in demand and the health workforce may struggle to deliver the influenza vaccinations while dealing with both COVID-19 and business as usual.

While the Ministry of Health is considering the non-regulated vaccinating health worker role to supplement the regulated health workforce. NZNO does not agree with or support a proposal, to make this workforce permanent, expand the list of vaccines they can administer and reduce the age range to children 5 years and above and modify their role in the process (e.g. preparing the vaccines, gaining informed consent).

NZNO recommends that the widening of access be promoted among Maori and Pacific people and proven strategies used to encourage the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination be considered.

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[www.nzno.org.nz](http://www.nzno.org.nz)

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your proposal.

Nāku noa nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lucia Bercinkas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lucia Bercinkas**  
Senior Policy Analyst