

# COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

To Health Professionals

23 March 2020

Telephone: 03 364 1777

Fax: 03 379 6484

**Canterbury**

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

Dear colleagues

We have been asked to forward the following Ministry of Health advisory to all health professionals in our districts.

Ngā mihi

Dr Cheryl Brunton

Dr Ramon Pink

Medical officers of health

## ADVISORY SUMMARY:

As part of our response to COVID-19, the Ministry has brought forward influenza vaccination for those at greatest risk of influenza - this includes those eligible for publicly funded influenza vaccination and healthcare and other front line workers. Early vaccination is available to the public through general practices and vaccinating pharmacies, and for healthcare and other front line workers, through employer-funded vaccination programmes.

**We are asking providers to defer privately funded vaccination until 13 April 2020. This includes employer-funded vaccination programmes outside of health and other frontline sectors.**

This policy will best ensure our most vulnerable communities are protected, while also keeping influenza vaccination available for others who choose to be vaccinated. Influenza usually rises to winter levels in New Zealand from late May or early June, therefore we do not expect the short delay in the private vaccination programme to impact on our protection against influenza. More than 400,000 extra influenza vaccines are being supplied to New Zealand this winter over the amount that were used in 2019.

## Health and frontline workers

The following healthcare and frontline workers should be considered a priority for influenza vaccination prior to 13 April 2020, as outlined in New Zealand's H5N1 pre-pandemic vaccine policy. If you have any queries relating to the 2020 Influenza vaccination programme please contact [immunisation@health.govt.nz](mailto:immunisation@health.govt.nz)

Sector or service	Rationale for selection
Health and associated services including aged residential care, staff in residential homes and disability support services	Maintenance of the health sector's ability to provide acute services will alleviate morbidity and reduce mortality among the general population.
Police	Police personnel may be required to support of health services by assisting with Public Health measures, provision of direct assistance to health services and the public, and maintaining public order.
Defence	Defence forces may be required to provide assistance either by providing direct medical assistance and support, and/or by assisting with the implementation of Public Health measures.
Border management agencies	Border management and protection functions will need to be maintained at all times.
Social support	Social support organisations will have an essential role to play in delivering a range of social support measures to people directly affected.
Corrections	Corrections facilities and community staff provide essential services that cannot be interrupted, but which by the nature of their operations place expect staff to accept an increased level of risk.
Fire Service	Fire Services may be involved in first medical responses, and must be maintained at the highest practical level.