

PRESS RELEASE

Chief Executives appointed to interim entities Health New Zealand and Māori Health Authority

20 December

The Chairs of the interim entities Health New Zealand and Māori Health Authority have appointed Fepulea'i Margie Apa and Riana Manuel as Chief Executives to lead these two new health entities.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa, currently Chief Executive of Counties Manukau District Health Board, has been appointed Chief Executive of interim Health New Zealand.

Riana Manuel, currently Chief Executive of Hauraki Primary Health Organisation and iwi-based not-for-profit Te Korowai Hauora o Hauraki, has been appointed as Chief Executive of the interim Māori Health Authority.

Health New Zealand Chair Rob Campbell said there was a focus on recruiting leaders with the right skills and a track record of implementing visionary and strategic leadership.

“Both Margie and Riana have demonstrable experience and expertise in their own right and have a mix of skills that will ensure they complement each other.”

“Transforming our health system to better serve New Zealanders requires a collective approach across the sector with Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority working in partnership with each other, and our sector partners.”

Co-Chair of the Māori Health Authority, Sharon Shea, said the two appointments were a positive milestone towards elevating the voice of whānau.

“Our search for Chief Executives was founded on selection criteria that paired dynamic leadership with commitment to meeting the aspirations of Māori.

“This reform is all about people. I am pleased we have been able to appoint leaders with such strong experience in delivering healthcare services to communities at a local level.”

Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority will work closely with the Ministry of Health in its role as kaitiaki of the health system, and the newly established Public Health Agency within the Ministry, to achieve better outcomes for people and whānau.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa has more than 20 years of experience in health leadership and leads an organisation which provides health services to more than 600,000 people.

“Margie has a long history in health leadership in New Zealand and a dedication to the communities she has served in those leadership roles,” Rob Campbell said.

“The Board was clear in its need to find a leader to drive once-in-a-generation transformation of the health system. We need a critical focus on ensuring health services and resources are designed and delivered to meet the reform aspiration of achieving equity for Māori, Pasifika and the disability community.

“Margie is an undoubted agent of change and I have every confidence that our journey towards a fairer and equitable system will be supported with Margie at the helm of Health New Zealand.”

Health New Zealand will become Aotearoa New Zealand's largest employer, incorporating the employees and assets of all 20 District Health Boards, public health units, shared services agencies and Te Hiringa Hauora to deliver a nationally coordinated system with a strong local focus.

“To be part of a transformation that will, ultimately, improve people’s lives is a tremendous opportunity and I will work to ensure that change doesn’t distract us but enables us to do what we come to work for everyday – to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all New Zealanders with a focus on achieving health equity for our most vulnerable,” Margie said.

“I look forward to working with our experienced, dedicated and talented people throughout the country to simplify and build resilience in our system, and in doing so free-up our health professionals to focus their time and energy on what they do best.”

Co-Chair of the interim Māori Health Authority, Tipa Mahuta welcomed Riana’s appointment.

“This will be a complex role and we needed someone who could rise to the challenge of supporting the sector to meet the equity obligations of Māori, alongside Margie,” Tipa said.

“This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to mobilise the health sector and deliver outcomes for whānau that we all, as Māori, have long been waiting for.”

Riana has a nursing background and was front and centre in driving COVID-19 vaccination efforts in Hauraki.

“My motivation comes from connecting and engaging with local communities, because that is where you really see the impact of change,” Riana said.

“As a person who has been raised in my village (Manaia), I understand the need to effect change at a local level and am also aware of how local initiatives by Māori for Māori often have the biggest impact.

“I am proud to be stepping up into the Chief Executive role of the transformational Māori Health Authority. The opportunity ahead of us is immense and we’ll be working closely with Health New Zealand to implement the changes that New Zealanders deserve.”

Both Chief Executives will commence in their roles in the first quarter of 2022.

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