

People Pānui

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Health system reform news and updates for the health workforce.

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Roadshows provide key health system reform information

Over the last few weeks the Transition Unit has been visiting towns and cities across Te Waipounamu (the South Island) providing updates on the reform of the health system.

These 90-minute sessions have been attended in person and virtually by almost 1,000 people.

This week, we begin our North Island series. We have recently sent out registration links for sessions up to 17 November. If you haven't received information about this yet and would like to, please email support.tu@dpmc.govt.nz

The sessions give an overview of the reforms, the key initiatives currently underway, and how you can stay informed about further opportunities to get involved. There is also a chance to ask questions.

The Transition Unit team has gained some great insight into the key areas of interest from those attending the sessions. Over the next little while we'll be sharing updates on these areas of interest on our website and will be continuing to capture questions as we visit locations across the North Island.

To start with, we've provided updates on two key areas of interest below.

Disability support services and health reform

The current health system has two related, but distinct, areas to consider in terms of disabled people and disability. Support services which are designed specifically for disabled people – called Disability Support Services (DSS) – and providing health services to disabled people.

Our health and disability system has not performed consistently in

providing either Disability Support Services or equitable health outcomes for the disabled community – this was evidenced further in the Health and Disability System Review.

Following this review, the Government commissioned further work around how best to ensure the aspirations of the disabled community are met.

The Government has announced that a new Ministry for Disabled People will be established. This will ensure joined-up supports and services are available to disabled people and drive improved overall outcomes for disabled people. The new Ministry

will also lead and coordinate cross-government disability policy, deliver and transform disability support services and progress work on broader disability system transformation.

This work complements the work underway within the health reform programme to ensure all New Zealanders have equitable access to the care they need, regardless of who they are or where they live.

[Read more about services for disabled people](#)

Patient-management systems

We want a future where people and their clinicians can access patient information through the equivalent of a single patient record.

It's possible to achieve this without needing to roll the same platform out to everyone. Modern approaches can deliver secure information sharing between different care providers and systems much more quickly and affordably than through a single platform rollout.

With varying levels of digital maturity and different legacy systems among DHBs, we're looking for innovative solutions that allow us to use our resources most effectively. Some of this work is underway, including the Hira programme (previously known as the national health information platform) being delivered by the Ministry of Health. This is focused on enabling a virtual health record by securely drawing information about a person from different systems. The Hira programme will continue under the new system.

[Read more about the Hira programme](#)

Webinar with the New Zealand Public Service Association



The Health Reform Transition Unit was recently invited to discuss the reform of the health system with the New Zealand Public Service Association.

Deputy Director of the Transition Unit, Martin Hefford, took members through the key elements of the work programme.

Megan Barry, Mental Health Nurse and PSA Youth National Co-Convenor said the webinar was a great introduction to the future of Aotearoa New Zealand's health system.

"Martin spoke about the process behind the setup of the new health system and the reason for this. I enjoyed hearing about how our communities and our people are at the centre of these decisions. I encourage everyone to find the time to watch. As a health care professional, it made me feel I was a part of the change rather than the change happening to me. I look forward to the upcoming webinars and hearing what's next for the Transition Unit."

[View a recording of the webinar](#)

What health reform legislation means for you

The Bill giving effect to the reform of the health system – the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill – has been introduced to Parliament, marking the start of the legislative process to create the future of health in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Bill paves the way for the new system by formally creating the entities Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority. So what does the legislation mean for you, or others working in the health sector?

What the legislation says about those employed in the health sector

The Bill makes it clear that Health New Zealand, once established on 1 July 2022, will take over the assets, liabilities, contracts and employees of the existing 20 District Health Boards.

It means that, if you're employed by a DHB (aside from Chief Executives) you'll simply transfer over to Health New Zealand on the same terms and conditions on 1 July 2022. If you're employed by a Primary Health Organisation, the structural change of the health system is unlikely to have an immediate impact on your employment. If you're employed by a shared service agency there will also be no immediate change to your employment – the only change the legislation makes is that your agency will be owned by Health New Zealand, rather than by a DHB.

The timeframe for changes

The Bill sets out the timeframe for the official switch to the new health system – 1 July 2022.

In the meantime, both Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority have been established as interim agencies with Boards appointed.

Their first priority has been to recruit a Chief Executive to lead the transition to the new system – once these Chief Executives are appointed and supporting leadership teams developed, further details of the structure of the organisations will take shape.

Any changes to collective agreements

The Bill clarifies that collective agreements will continue after 1 July. This is also true for employment policies of DHBs – these will continue after 1 July as though they are employment policies of Health New Zealand and the organisation will consult with employees before introducing new policies that will have a material effect on employees.

To stay up to date on the progress of the Bill, [visit the Parliament website](#)

You might also want to [watch Health Minister Andrew Little talk about the Bill](#) during a briefing with health sector stakeholders when it was introduced to Parliament on 20 October.

Your thoughts – insight from roadshow attendees



Jan Bensemman, Chair of Motueka Community House and President of Motueka Red Cross; **Rae Dozell**, Manager of Motueka Community House; and **Marie Lindaya**, Member of the Health Consumer Council and Area Councillor Chair Tasman/Marlborough New Zealand Red Cross



Peter McIntosh from West Coast DHB and **Susan Watson**, General Manager of O'Connor Home in Westport

Tell us about what you learnt from the Future of health information roadshow session

Rae: I thought it was a useful presentation and I got a much better understanding about the reforms. I really like the idea of setting up the Māori Health Authority. I also liked the idea that there will be increased collaboration between agencies and community groups.

Jan: We need to do something about the 'post code lottery' so I hope the reforms help that. I was pleased to hear about the need for more connection and collaboration.

Marie: I like the idea of the Māori Health Authority. I think our refugees will have a strong connection to the organisation because they will be able to connect culturally with it. I think the reforms will bring a better ease of access to health care for everyone. I'm pleased to see the cultural capital is going to be enhanced.

Susan: I learnt a lot from attending and I am glad I made the effort to come along. I got a much better understanding of the structure and composition of the different agencies and organisations. I'm confident with the future of health.

Peter: I think there are many great opportunities for the future, and it's good to be a part of the transition. Being on the West Coast, I'm pleased there is a focus on getting better access to services.

People working in the Transition Unit

– Simon Medcalf

In this edition, we chat to Simon Medcalf who has played a key role in developing the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill.



Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

I'm only a recent arrival in New Zealand – I moved here from the UK with my whānau in early 2020, arriving four weeks before lockdown! My substantive job is as Group Manager Strategy in the Ministry of Health, where I worked mainly on COVID-19

strategy and Alert Levels, and I've been on secondment to the Transition Unit since September 2020. My background is in the NHS and Civil Service in England – over about 13 years I've led national reforms and programmes for health and social care in the Department of Health, and spent time as Head of Mental Health in NHS England.

What's your role as part of the health reform?

I'm co-leading the policy work in the TU. This includes all of the policy choices on the design of the future system, helping Ministers to make decisions on the big questions. It covers policy briefings, working on the legislation, advice on funding and budget, and supporting Ministers and Cabinet to understand and oversee progress with the reforms. Since the TU was set up, we think we have written more pages than War and Peace! I think that speaks to the complexity and impact of these reforms, and the importance of considering all possible factors and approaches in designing changes of this size.

What are you working on at the moment?

The big focus over the past month has been on the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill, which has just been introduced to Parliament. This is the key legislation that will create the reformed system. It has been a fascinating experience to see the Bill develop and give life to the new entities and the principles and accountabilities that will underpin the system. We are now preparing for the Select Committee process to debate the Bill, which will give New Zealanders the opportunity to provide their feedback and input to the Committee.

What happens next?

The Bill process will move forward over the coming months through Select Committee debates – supporting that will be a big focus. But the policy work doesn't stop there. We will also be working on supporting Ministers through the process for Budget '22, taking forward more detailed policy work for Day 1 of the new system, developing the system-wide approach to monitoring and reporting, drafting the interim Government Policy Statement, and much more.

What is your advice to the health sector?

Firstly, I encourage everyone with an interest to have a **look at the Bill** and think about how you might contribute to the Select Committee process. The legislation isn't just about technical legal descriptions of entities – it also says something important about the type of system we want, and the common principles that should inform how people work at all levels. It's important to get it right.

More broadly, I have been struck in my short time in this country by the incredible commitment of everyone working in our health system. In unprecedented circumstances, the focus on working collectively and collaboratively for the benefit of the whole population has shown what we can achieve through these reforms. We want to keep learning from the expertise and experience of the health sector, so please keep engaged and tell us what needs to change and how.