



The Royal New Zealand
College of General Practitioners
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa

4 June 2025

Pharmac
PO Box 10254
The Terrace
WELLINGTON 6143

By email: consult@pharmac.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

Pharmac - Proposal to enter into a new supply agreement for the COVID-19 vaccine following a competitive procurement process for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines for New Zealand.

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (the College) is the largest medical college in Aotearoa New Zealand with a membership of 6,018 specialist General Practitioners (GPs). Our General Practice Education Programme (GPEP) and Rural Hospital Medicine Training Programme (RHMTTP) trains the specialist General Practitioner and Rural Hospital Doctor workforce. The Medical Council of New Zealand accredits the College to deliver a Vocationally Registered workforce through its Continuing Professional Development Programme, making up 40 percent of the specialist medical workforce. The College is committed to prioritising the reduction of health inequities experienced by Māori, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the rights of Māori. To do this we prioritise initiatives that support our members to develop cultural safety capability throughout our Training, Member Professional Development and Quality programmes.

Our members provide first point of contact medical care to patients and their whānau to effectively manage 90 percent of all patient healthcare concerns in the community. Each year approximately 24 million¹ patient contacts are recorded by 1,077 general practice teams across Aotearoa.

Support for COVID-19 Vaccine Comirnaty

The College supports the proposal to supply the COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty to the groups identified in the Pharmac consultation. We also support the availability of an alternative vaccine brand for individuals whose clinical needs require a different option.

Equity of Access

We acknowledge that the proposed eligibility criteria will enhance equitable access to Comirnaty across all New Zealand populations. Removing cost as a barrier to treatment is a cost-effective measure that will improve health outcomes, particularly for individuals with underlying conditions such as obesity and diabetes. Addressing these conditions will also strengthen resilience against both chronic health threats and acute public health crises.²

Prioritise High-Risk Communities

Ensuring protection for all high-risk communities must remain a priority. Māori and Pacific peoples face a higher risk of COVID-19 infection, hospitalisation, and death, largely due to the higher prevalence of comorbidities such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. The College considers it is essential that vaccine access for Māori and Pacific populations is prioritised to address these disparities and improve health equity.³

If you require further clarification regarding our submission, please contact Maureen Gillon, Manager Policy, Advocacy, Insights – Maureen.Gillon@rnzcgp.org.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Luke Bradford
BM(Hons), BSc(Hons), FRNZCGP
Medical Director | Mātanga Hauora

¹ Ministry of Health, 2024 data.

² Kompaniyets L, Pennington A, Goodman A, Rosenblum H, Belay B, Ko JY, et al. Underlying Medical Conditions and Severe Illness Among 540,667 Adults Hospitalized With COVID-19, March 2020–March 2021. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2021;18:210123. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd18.210123>.

³ Tukuitonga C, Shaw G. Why Maori and Pacific people should get the vaccine first. Newsroom. 16.2.21. Available at: <https://newsroom.co.nz/2021/02/16/why-mori-and-pacific-people-should-get-the-vaccine-first/>

