

Tēnā koutou,

Working together to realise our shared vision for public and population health

At our Shared Public Health Leadership Group meeting in March 2023, we agreed it was time to review the initial Public Health Operating Model (PHOM) and specifically the associated accountability framework which has informed the working arrangements across our three organisations. We had heard of several challenges in specific areas and wanted to reduce areas of ambiguity, enhance collaboration and support of our leadership and kaimahi across our organisations, and ensure that our ways of working meet each of our Te Tiri i and equity obligations.

The public health system has achieved much in the last year including the establishment of new organisations, functions and teams. We would like to acknowledge the important foundational work which has been achieved, in addition to the ongoing mahi public health teams across Aotearoa are delivering on a day-to-day basis to support and protect the health of local communities.

We jointly commissioned the Sapere Research Group to provide us with independent support in this review. Sapere have interviewed and delivered focus groups with around fifty leaders and kaimahi from across our organisations. The team have also mapped the original proposals endorsed by Cabinet and considered how they have translated into the framework and the organisational arrangements in each entity. A huge thank you to those of you who gave your time to support this.

This process has uncovered coordination issues and challenges in a number of areas. These can be intense and are absorbing energy that we need to put into effective delivery of our functions. The recommendations for action span seven key areas which we will take forward together

PUBLIC HEALTH ACCOUNTABILITIES IN ACTION

1. Agreed policymaking tikanga and expectations
 2. Surveillance functions and management interfaces with strategic partners
 3. Outbreak management roles and operating procedures
 4. Regulatory strategy, framework, operations, and enforcement
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BUILDING COHESION ACROSS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ECOSYSTEM

5. Articulating shared strategic priorities and plans
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6. Collaborative leadership mechanisms

7. Collaborative clinical governance and clinical risk management

One of the challenges for a system during transformation is ensuring sufficient attention is paid to communications and engagement. While each of us have necessarily prioritised communication within our own teams, we recognise this is a role we need to address together given how important it is for our national, regional, and local leaders to understand the new operating arrangements, and how we intend to operate as a system. This, our first joint letter, is one part of planned improvements to communication and information flow across our teams.

Work has already commenced in some of the recommended action areas, but others will mean initiating fresh mahi. We are working with our leadership teams to determine how we prioritise and address these challenges, including any additional resources that may be required.

We are committing together to work actively to address these issues to improve clarity and cohesion over the next few months, and will provide an update within the next month with more specificity on the plans to address the issues, timescales and nominated leads.

We have a once in a generation opportunity to ensure public and population health is at the forefront of our New Zealand health system. Building on our collective strengths as public health organisations, with each of us able to play our part, is critical to having the impact that we all aspire to, to achieve Pae Ora across our communities.

Thank you for the continuing work you are doing to improve public and population health in Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi nui



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