



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



Summary of Health Workforce Engagement



Citation: Ministry of Health. 2022.
*Summary of Health Workforce
Engagement*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Published in November 2022
by the Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
HP 8647

This document is available at
health.govt.nz



MINISTRY OF HEALTH



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Background

The health workforce is an integral part of the health system, no health service can be delivered, no person cared for, no health outcome achieved without people. People are our greatest asset and a key enabler to improving the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Manatū Hauora is developing a long-term health workforce strategy to guide system settings and ensure New Zealand has a sustainable, representative and responsive health workforce that can meet the future needs of people and whānau.

The long-term health workforce strategy will align with the New Zealand Health Strategy and support system shifts towards pae ora (healthy futures).

Health sector stakeholders, through a variety of forums, have directly raised with us the challenges facing our health workforce. Utilising these insights, we embarked on an engagement process

in collaboration with Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora to build a cohesive approach that ensures people are at the centre of our process and development of the Health Workforce Strategy.

The focus of the engagement process was to provide visibility of our approach and enable a variety of stakeholders to contribute and build a common understanding of workforce challenges and potential opportunities.

Each engagement event had a wide range of stakeholders, from individual health workers to representatives from responsible authorities, health profession colleges, professional associations, community and primary care organisations including Kaupapa Māori health organisations, private hospitals, education providers, and Iwi Māori Partnership Board members.



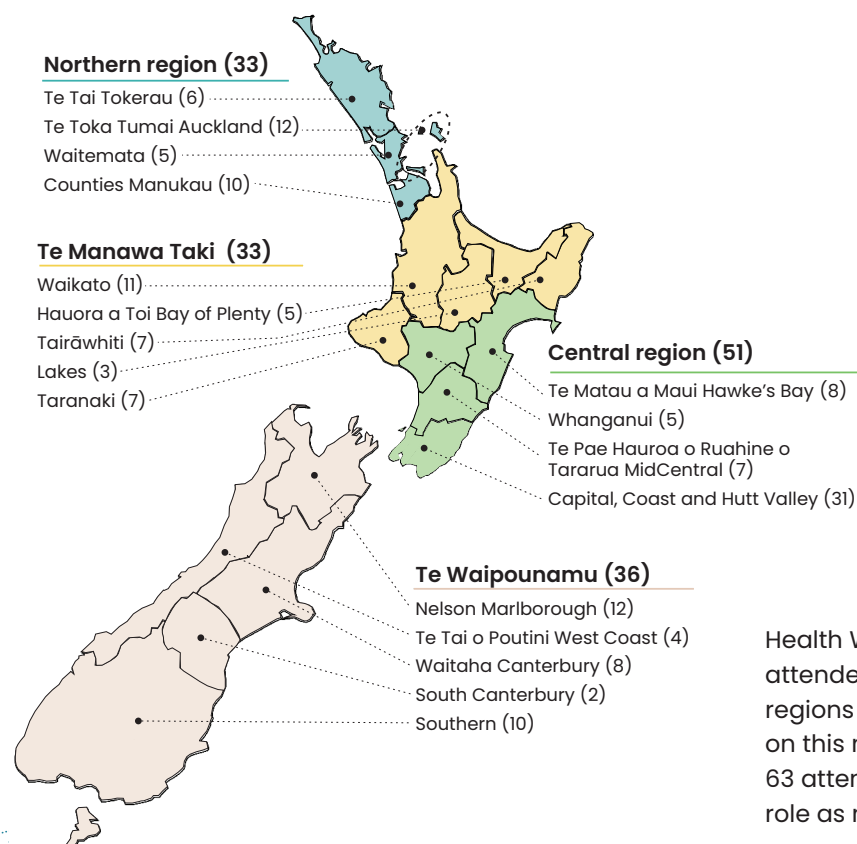
Our engagement to date

Our engagement has included a variety of activities to ensure maximum participation from health workers and sector representatives from across Aotearoa. Engagement activities included a one-day in-person event, an online platform, a webinar series and visits to a number of localities across the country. The engagement included information on health workforce initiatives to date and enabled health sector stakeholders to provide feedback, discuss and prioritise workforce challenges and opportunities. Further detail on each of the engagement activities is provided below.

The Health Workforce Dialogue was a one-day, in-person event held at Parliament on 12 November 2022. This enabled a diverse group of health workforce representatives across Aotearoa to come together, hear from each other about the challenges they face and opportunities they see for change.

The day consisted of keynote speeches from the Minister of Health and senior leaders from the health agencies, and sessions where attendees discussed and prioritised workforce challenges and opportunities. Recordings of the keynote speeches, question and answer sessions and some participant feedback are available on the Manatū Hauora website.

- There were more than 200 attendees made up of frontline health workers, health sector employers, representatives from responsible authorities, professional bodies, tertiary education providers.
- Attendees came from all districts and regions across Aotearoa, New Zealand.
- Attendee registration ethnicity data showed 39 percent identified as Māori, 2 percent Other and 59 percent New Zealand European.



Health Workforce Dialogue event attendees came from districts and regions across Aotearoa as shown on this map. In addition, there were 63 attendees that identified their role as national.



Tātou, Manatū Hauora online engagement platform, is an engagement channel for the health workforce to submit ideas around workforce challenges and opportunities. People could discuss, support and challenge ideas that had been submitted.

Whilst the Tātou health workforce challenge will be closed to further submissions on 30 November 2022, the ideas provided will remain available for viewing.

- As of 24 November 2022, there are 285 registered users. The platform has generated 72 individual opportunities and 105 further comments from the workforce.

A Health Workforce Webinar series was held in early November to support conversations on health workforce

initiatives, with senior leaders from Manatū Hauora, Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora. The health sector was able to hear directly from senior leaders and participate in Q&As.

- On 1 November, Te Whatu Ora led a discussion on the short- to medium-term workforce initiatives.
- On 7 November, Te Aka Whai Ora and the Māori Health Directorate led a hui on challenges and opportunities for the Māori Health workforce.
- On 10 November, Manatū Hauora led a discussion on the role of Manatū Hauora in the new system, potential legislative and regulatory changes, and the development of the strategic framework.

Recordings and transcriptions are available on the Manatū Hauora website*.

Health Workforce Taskforce visits were undertaken by workforce team leads from Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora and Manatū Hauora visiting localities across Aotearoa. It is an opportunity to hear from the senior leaders and frontline health workers, as well as share information on current workforce initiatives and the development of a health workforce strategy. Visits to localities commenced in October 2022 with further visits being planned for early 2023.

- Note, due to technical issues, the 7 November webinar was not recorded. However, speech notes from the discussion are available on the Manatū Hauora website.



Summary of engagement feedback

Participants from the Health Workforce Dialogue event provided feedback through facilitated sessions. Quotes provided in this section, were recorded on the day, and are by representatives from different parts of the health sector who attended as guests.

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‘I think today’s event was a really good opportunity to discuss the workforce challenges, that are facing us in the health care sector. We know that it’s a complex area that has quite a lot of intersecting parts and it was really nice to come and have a chance to hear from different areas of the sector and kind of work towards solutions collaboratively.’

– Representative from Tū Ora Compass Health

‘Sitting next to the director of the pharmaceutical society is just awesome, because we both have a voice here today on equal level.’

– Representative from New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapist

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Manatū Hauora has collected and analysed the feedback on workforce challenges and opportunities across the engagement events. Although, there was a variety of feedback and views expressed across the engagement events, there were five key themes that emerged highlighting the recurrence of particular challenges and opportunities.

The key themes included:

- significant health workforce shortages across a broad range of health workers
- wellbeing of the health workforce is at risk
- health workforce maldistribution, particularly in the rural setting
- under-representation of Māori, Pacific and disabled people in the health workforce
- variable cultural competency and responsiveness of the health workforce

These are discussed in more detail below.



Health workforce shortages

Stakeholders have consistently raised workforce shortages and increasing vacancies across the health sector as the biggest challenges facing our health workforce. This is as a result of a range of factors from gaps in workforce planning, to insufficient numbers entering health education, to issues in attracting and retaining health workers in Aotearoa.

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‘Part of my job is to support the kaiāwhina that we have working in our organisation and they’re a really important part of our service delivery in primary health care....being able to pivot, being able to do so many jobs within the primary health care sector that kind of does go unrecognised or is not thought about...I’m really interested in what’s happening in secondary care with the kaiāwhina because the term being used there is a little different than what we use in primary care.’

– Representative from Te Korowai Hauora o Hauraki

‘We need to train across public and private sectors if we’re going to get the numbers we need. Plus, at the moment with the very significantly diminished elective surgery planned care in our public hospitals, our current cohort of trainees are really suffering from a lack of training. So, we have a significant issue that we need to remedy very soon.’

– Representative from New Zealand Orthopaedic Association

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Challenges raised by stakeholders:

- gaps in workforce planning create a mismatch of supply and demand, and inequitable distribution of health workers across the system
- a disconnect and inadequate linkage between the education and health sectors, with participants commenting on requiring support in navigating career pathways and a lack of flexibility in moving between professions or upskilling
- poor image of the health sector and negative representation in media impacts attraction of people into the health workforce
- difficulties in retention throughout the pipeline of trainees, trainers, health workers and mentors due to workload, remuneration, and cost of living, results in workers relocating overseas or leaving the health sector
- regulatory barriers and restrictive scopes of practice impact on health workers’ delivery of services, with regulations not reflecting patient cultural needs
- immigration settings are a barrier to attracting and retaining the international workforce, with registration processes and requirements being difficult to navigate and meet
- collective agreements are restrictive and can be an impediment in what health workers would like and what health employers can enable



Opportunities raised by stakeholders:

- creating a long-term national health workforce plan that provides consistency and commitment in growing the workforce and is informed by evidence
 - innovative training approaches that involve integration and collaboration between the health sector and education and training pathways. Examples provided include:
 - increasing the use of simulation-based training such as that provided for midwifery students at Auckland University of Technology
 - national implementation of a public and private training programme for orthopaedics currently being piloted in Christchurch
 - building national programmes for professional development
 - supporting the development of supervision and mentorship positions throughout the health education and career pathway, such as clinical coaches that are accessible and available on the floor, and specific mentorship for various health professions
 - providing wrap around support for students with increasing use of “earn as you learn” programmes, funded placements and increasing use of on-the-job training to help attract and retain students in the health sector
 - utilising the broad skills and capabilities of the workforce to alleviate workforce pressures. This involves enabling health professions to work at the top of their scope, across silos and disciplines by utilising those with lived experiences, kaiāwhina and assistant workforces
 - improve the provision of community-based and led care by using local knowledge and data to address a range of population health needs. For example, centralised pools of carers can assist in providing diabetes care, support national screening programmes and immunisation
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Health workforce wellbeing

Participants raised wellbeing in the workforce as being at risk due to the persistent pressures faced in the health sector. Poor health workforce wellbeing impacts workforce resilience and the desire to continue working in health.

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‘(I’m) really worried about the workforce. Working in primary care, we’ve lost clinicians, we’ve lost GPs, we’ve lost nurses. They’ve either left the sector to take up other work—and people have been doing it hard for the last couple of years so now they’re taking leave, and some of us are still getting COVID and taking time off work. A little bit worried about the sector if there was to be another outbreak...I don’t know whether our health sector would handle something that would come about quickly.’

– Representative from Te Korowai Hauora o Hauraki

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Challenges raised by stakeholders:

- an increase in workload due to existing models of care being inflexible in the way the workforce can deliver services
- remuneration impacts retention of the health workforce: non-competitive wages with no variation between urban and rural areas within Aotearoa and overall with Australia
- poor working conditions further adding pressures and leading to burnout. Examples of working conditions include toxic culture, barriers to working to the top of one’s scope, work overload, reduced flexibility in working hours and entry level staff being employed on a casual basis

Opportunities raised by stakeholders:

- creating a safer work environment and increasing focus on staff wellbeing. For example, providing good rostering, dedicated staff spaces, childcare, and parking
- enabling role flexibility to encourage more participation from health workers, for example, shorter shifts for those providing childcare
- enabling health workers to be efficiently deployed across regions where there is the greatest need
- breaking down silos by planning services to coordinate various health professions which can work together to deliver services
- protected time for supporting training and mentoring



Health workforce maldistribution, particularly in rural settings

Significant disparities in the distribution of health services have a disproportionate impact on the rural population and the health workforce. The challenges predominantly involve education and overall workforce shortages, affecting the mix of health workers available to provide health services.

Challenges raised by stakeholders:

- the location of education and training is impacting the attraction and retention of rural students and health workers
- greater barriers to career development for rural health workers due to a lack of funding, insufficient release time, high costs to train, access to education and gaining accreditation
- IT systems do not talk to each other and pose a barrier to connecting regions

Opportunities raised by stakeholders:

- creating incentives to attract and retain health workers in rural settings through increases in rural placements and funding
- better accessibility to training through the provision of virtual and satellite learning options and local training
- enabling the deployment of health workers between employers and regions, and from district into community – enables building of skills and capabilities and a focus on areas where there is greatest need
- introducing models of care that enable greater utilisation of the skills and capabilities of the kaiāwhina workforce
- integrated IT and digital systems to enable sharing of data nationwide



Māori, Pacific and disabled people are under-represented in the health workforce

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‘Let’s get on with it, let’s scholarship (sic) and prioritise pathways for Māori. We have one (Māori) medical oncologist. Let’s prioritise a pathway that’s scholarships, that’s supported, so that in 2040 we have at least five and let’s just get on with it... (we want) pretty much everyone who has put their kupu into the world that they’re up for equity and they’re up for supporting Māori. So, we slightly want to move that commitment from supporting Māori into these positions to implementing prioritised scholarships and supported pathways for Māori and have that a little bit stronger, that commitment.’

– Representative from Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership

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The health workforce is not representative of the population of Aotearoa with under-representation of Māori, Pacific, and disabled people. This limits the opportunity to tailor health services to meet their needs as well as the wider population needs.

Challenges raised by stakeholders:

- there is insufficient support provided in schools to attract Māori, Pacific, and disabled people into the health workforce
- the education structure and design is colonised and inflexible with not enough cultural education, lack of mātauranga and rongoā knowledge to apply in health settings
- existing Māori and Pacific health workers are overburdened and under-resourced for the activities and services they provide

- there are limited opportunities for health workers that have a disability
- there is a lack of Māori representation in leadership roles

Opportunities raised by stakeholders:

- supporting and growing the Māori and Pacific workforce, leaders, and mentors through prioritisation of their entry into health education, recruitment, professional development, and retention including earn as you learn support mechanisms
- strengthening cultural hubs which can act as centres of community excellence (pro-equity), for example, Kaupapa Māori Research Centre
- adopting Māori led approaches and models of health care by collaborating with the Iwi Māori Partnership Boards to guide practices and design of Te Ao Māori health services
- supporting Māori designed programmes that are already working to grow the Māori health workforce, for example, Pūhoro STEM Academy which seeks to improve equitable access and representation of Māori in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Mātauranga
- Ensuring services are appropriately funded to match both the delivery costs and meet patient and whānau needs
- Develop and implement a Māori health workforce specific support programme, currently there are only general Employee Assistance Programmes



Cultural competency and responsiveness of the health workforce is variable

Participants noted the variability of cultural competency and responsiveness of the workforce. This impacts on the ability to connect with patients and whānau, to ensure they receive tailored and best possible health care.

Challenges raised by stakeholders:

- restrictive scopes that do not reflect patient's cultural needs or enable delivery of culturally responsive care
- a lack of cultural intelligence and safety in the existing workforce with a need to address systematic racism and a colonised system
- insufficient and variability of cultural education in the health sector

Opportunities raised by stakeholders:

- enabling greater implementation of a holistic approach in healthcare delivery and empowering patients and whānau; a 'hands up, not hands out whānau empowerment'
- embedding focus on health equity and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles to drive cultural shifts for inclusivity
- increasing training and professional development in cultural competency and responsiveness, for example, greater use of te reo, training to work with disabled people
- supporting delivery of health literacy amongst our population to improve navigation of the health system

Where to from here

The insights from the engagement to date will be used to inform the development of a Health Workforce Strategy. The insights are also being considered as part of the prioritisation of workforce initiatives by the joint Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora Workforce Taskforce.

The Health Workforce Strategy will identify the system level changes required to ensure Aotearoa has a sustainable, representative and responsive health workforce that can meet the future needs of people and whānau. Some of

these system level changes may require a review of legislation that impacts the way health professions are enabled to deliver care, or a review of the pathways from training and education through to employment to ensure we attract and retain the health workforce of the future.

Further engagement and opportunities to provide feedback on the Health Workforce Strategy will occur in 2023 through a variety of channels including on the Manatū Hauora website and online platform, Tātou.