



Office of Hon Tony Ryall

Minister of Health
Minister of State Services

26 JAN 2011

Ms Sally Webb
Chair
Bay of Plenty District Health Board
Private Bag 12 024
TAURANGA 3143

Dear Sally

Letter of Expectations for District Health Boards and their subsidiary entities for the 2011/12 year

The Government wants **better, sooner, more convenient** health care for all New Zealanders. This means strong priority is given to improving frontline services within available resources.

District Health Boards (DHB) are rising to this challenge, providing New Zealanders with more services from the large sums of money invested in the public health service.

Despite the tight financial times, the Government has increased Vote Health by more than \$1.2 billion over two years. In many countries, health budgets have been curtailed or even reduced. We are determined to protect and grow the public health service.

Thank you for the commitment of you and your staff to improving the New Zealand public health service, and providing even more care to patients. We appreciate DHB staff have achieved so much for patients during these difficult economic times.

Expectations for all District Health Boards:

Improving service and reducing waiting times

The six Health Targets provide a clear and specific focus for action to improve patient care. DHBs have done well using these to improve both timely patient access to important services, and disease prevention.

Nationally, an extra 400 patients a week are getting elective surgery; more patients are getting cancer radiation treatment sooner; patients and their families are being seen faster in emergency departments; record levels of child immunisation; fewer smokers; more diabetes support.

While this is real progress for patients, there is still much room for improvement. We expect you to achieve the Health Targets, and continue improving waiting times.

Clinical Leadership

Clinical leadership is internationally recognised as a fundamental driver of improved patient care. It is also pivotal to greater job satisfaction for the health workforce.

We expect you to strengthen clinical engagement from bedside to boardroom. We also expect DHBs to work with their neighbours to further encourage and support clinical networks with clinicians leading the development and operation of each of the identified priority services, and the integration of services closer to home.

Services Closer to Home

New Zealanders want better access to a wider range of services closer to home. Closer integration of services across hospitals and the community will improve convenience for patients and reduce pressure on hospitals. We are increasing GP patient subsidies again and investing more in primary care.

We expect all DHBs to refocus more resources toward delivering services in local community settings, closer to patients. This work needs to particularly include attention to the following:

- reducing unplanned admissions through working with community and hospital-based clinicians on: chronic disease management, the frail elderly, after-hours
- ensuring community and hospital-based clinicians at the forefront of development, supported by management, and enabled to provide services more effectively
- developing efficient and effective integrated family health centres
- supporting the Whanau Ora Initiative.

To do this, you will need to engage doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other allied health professionals further into this work.

Health of Older People

As the 'baby boomers' age in larger numbers, the need grows to reorient our investment and service to meet their health and support needs. We are investing more in services for the elderly than ever before.

The recent aged residential care review showed we have a window of opportunity to act now, as demand remains relatively stable over the next few years. As the numbers of New Zealanders living longer increase, the number of people with dementia will also grow.

In preparing to meet the impact of our aging population on health services, we expect you to:

- focus on improving older people's underlying health and wellbeing - particularly in the areas of mental health (dementia) and preventing disease and injury
- build better systems - including using standardised monitoring and audit (InterRAI) as tools to improve quality across home-care and aged residential care
- provide new and expanded services - concentrating on dementia, and primary and community care improvements to avoid hospital admissions
- support family/whanau - in particular provision and access to respite care, day programmes and social supports
- engage in next steps of work on the aged residential care review.

Regional Collaboration

Greater regional collaboration between DHBs is an essential part of our future direction, to maximise clinical and financial resources. Following unanimous Parliamentary support of amending legislation last year, we expect to see regional collaboration develop significantly in the 2011/12 year, including:

- regional plans which focus on a small number of high priorities and the most vulnerable services in each region, with implementation plans to quickly and sustainably secure these services
- development of shared back-office functions across DHBs
- regionalisation of IT platforms, IT support and workforce development.

We expect you to support and advance the associated work of the National Health Board and Health Benefits Ltd both individually and collectively. Equally we thank you for your commitment to work with the Health Quality and Safety Commission.

All DHBs must budget and operate within their allocations and establish specific action plans to improve financial performance. This means your Board should be able to clearly demonstrate how it effectively takes ownership of financial performance and will develop and implement specific actions to live within its means year on year.

This means purchasing, productivity and quality improvements (including removing duplication and eliminating waste) and further reducing administrative overheads.

Along with the Chair of the NHB we look forward to receiving your Annual Plan for 2011/12 showing how you will progress the expectations outlined in this letter. Thank you again for all you and your team are doing.

Yours sincerely



Hon Tony Ryall
Minister of Health

cc Phil Cammish, Chief Executive Officer, Bay of Plenty District Health Board