

**Tuesday 22nd September 2020 1600 hours**

**Important information for all General Practices – Please share this with everyone in your team as appropriate**

Firstly, a huge 'well done'! We made it back to Level 1 and this is in no small part due to the solid response to COVID testing from the primary care sector. Learning from the last few months, it is important to take this time to give yourself some breathing room. We need to maintain vigilance, but it is also important to keep some stores in reserve where you can. If you are struggling and feeling the strain, do consider tapping into the pastoral services that are available to you through your PHO.

### Labs

- CHL are going to be doing a significant systems upgrade. The upgrade will commence at 6pm tomorrow night (Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September) and will be completed by 2pm on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September.
- Any results reported between 6pm Wednesday and 2pm Thursday will result in a duplicate copy of the result being sent to the PMS. More information is available in the PDF accompanying this email and [online](#).

### Border Testing

- We have put a system in place to flag when one of your patients have been tested as part of border surveillance. These people have consented to have information and results sent to their GP.
- This is to identify that this person works at the border and to help you to flag them as 'HIS', if they present with symptoms. You may also want to consider offering opportunistic asymptomatic testing to their family members, if you feel this is appropriate.
- 'Border worker' or 'border surveillance' will be documented in the PMS. These consult notes are uploaded to your inbox. If you are going to document this in their notes, please be careful to do this in a way that will not create stigma for this group of individuals.

### Masks

- With the move to Alert Level 1 masks are no longer required in Green stream. Medical masks should continue to be used in your Red stream.
- We know that some practices prefer to continue regular mask use in all areas, at all levels, and this is something that you will need to decide for yourselves, keeping in mind judicious use of PPE. PPE will continue to be supplied to practices at the level recommended by the Ministry of Health.
- During this period in Level 1 we encourage you to have conversations with your patients to raise continued awareness of being prepared with face coverings for the future. Useful guidance for patients on the use of face masks to reduce the spread of COVID is available on [HealthInfo](#).
- We are aware that some practices have been charging patients for masks during Level 2. We understand that this is to meet the additional costs when practices have opted to purchase their own supplies.
  - This has, however, raised significant concerns about equity and access to healthcare. This additional cost for some patients and whānau can create a barrier to accessing healthcare.
  - If Ministry of Health guidelines change and face coverings become a recommended requirement in all healthcare settings, we would encourage you to order your supply from CPRG rather than passing this cost onto your patients.
  - Continue messaging around bringing reusable face coverings where appropriate.
  - We know this message will not be popular for some practices, but this issue is generating significant concern in the community, and as always, we need to ensure that we are not driving health inequities in this response.

### PPE

PPE ordered through CPRG will now go back to weekly distribution. Please have your orders in by 5pm Tuesday, for delivery occurring from Wednesday to Friday. We will continue to monitor demand and testing activity in case we need to increase delivery timeframes in the future. You can order PPE [here](#).



## Temporary Waiver for Non-NZePS-Capable Systems

- Prescribers without a PMS capable of connecting to the NZ Electronic Prescribing Service (NZePS) are authorised by the temporary waiver to issue electronic signature-exempt prescriptions without NZePS barcodes. However, this waiver is limited:
  - It does not apply to controlled drugs other than Class C exempt or partially-exempt controlled drugs. Prescribing most controlled drugs still requires the prescriber to complete a signed, triplicate controlled drug prescription form; and
  - **This waiver is now due to expire on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.**

Kind regards,

Deborah Callahan  
Primary EOC Manager

Drs Hannah Gordon  
Clinical Lead

Aki Tominari  
Pharmacy Lead

P.S. **Testing centres** are still open at the following locations – no referrals required:

- Whānau Ora CBAC – 250 Pages Road, 9am-4pm, 7 days a week until further notice
- 174 Orchard Road CBAC – 9am-4pm, 7 days a week until further notice
- Ashburton Hospital CBAC – 28 Elizabeth Street, 10am-2pm, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.





Go to [www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz](http://www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz) for more COVID-19 information and resources