

General Practice Leaders' Forum

30 November 2022

Open Letter

Hon Andrew Little

By email: a.little@ministers.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister

General Practice in jeopardy

General Practice in New Zealand is facing a worsening crisis, where people in need of medical care in the community are facing unprecedented delays for care.

A lack of funding, workforce shortages and increasing workloads are placing the sustainability of essential family doctor services at risk and our essential front-line nurses are central to being able to provide ongoing services. All this at a time when government legislation intends to drive more medical care into the community setting.

The government's own research has confirmed the historic underfunding of general practice, that manifests in a workforce that simply cannot attract enough doctors and nurses to general practice. We are seeing and hearing the very real evidence of specialist GPs and primary care nurses leaving the sector, or indeed New Zealand for fairer pay, or simply walking away from the ongoing fight as the struggle has become too much.

The Government's decision to exclude general practice nurses from the recent pay parity funding announcement makes no sense. Comparisons between nursing MECA's show there is a 10.7% pay gap between nurses employed in general practice and those employed in hospital settings.

Without pay parity, general practice will lose its nursing workforce.

Without a nursing workforce there will be no general practice service.

Without a general practice service, the New Zealand health system will collapse and patients' lives will be lost.

We seek immediate action to extend full pay parity funding to all primary care nurses, including general practice nurses.

Ngā mihi



Dr Mark Peterson
Chair

