

Aide-Mémoire

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Hauora Hokianga Services Update

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To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Vanessa Thornton, Acting Co-Executive Regional Director, Northern		
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Contact for further discussion (if required)

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Purpose

1. This aide memoire provides you with an update on progress with Hauora Hokianga’s financial sustainability issues and provision of health services.

Background

2. Hauora Hokianga Trust are funded by Health NZ to provide primary care, urgent and after-hours care, community nursing, primary maternity services, aged residential care, home care support, Mātauranga Māori solutions including Rongoā Services and whanau support, and inpatient hospital care. Inpatient care is provided from Rawene Hospital. Hokianga is a small, rural community of approximately 7,000 enrolled patients with high deprivation.
3. Hauora Hokianga receive funding from multiple sources. The main funders are Health NZ and Mahitahi PHO (passing through Health NZ funding for general practice services).

Source of Funding (2025/26)	Amount (\$)
Te Whatu Ora	
Mahitahi PHO	
Ngati Hine	
Ministry of Health	
ACC	
Other	
Auckland University	
Whaikaha	
Total Funding	

Source: Hauora Hokianga Trust

4. Hauora Hokianga had a significant financial deficit in 2024/25 and have forecast a further larger deficit in 2025/26 [REDACTED]
5. Hauora Hokianga have been working with Health NZ on ways to improve their sustainability within their existing funding without reducing their clinical services. This includes:
 - a) Health NZ advice on optimising revenue streams through their PHO, Te Kaupapa Mahitahi Hauora.
 - b) Support to reduce costs such as consumables or use of lower cost alternatives. As an example, the use of telehealth through Emergency Consult is one area where there are potential lower cost alternatives or better commercial rates.
 - c) Efficient processes and performance. For example, ensuring processes for newborn enrolment are effective and efficient. This would enable capitation funding, immunisation precall/recall and immunisation performance payments.
6. However, more detailed financial analysis has identified the main driver of over-expenditure against their budget is in hospital services, urgent and after-hours care, and inpatient care. In addition, Hauora Hokianga incur costs not incurred by other primary care providers due to decisions by their Board to not request a patient co-payments for enrolled people that are not funded through Health NZ, and to fully fund ambulance transfer costs for enrolled patients.

Discussion

7. To address the main drivers of Hauora Hokianga's financial performance, Health NZ is currently working with them on opportunities to improve the performance and sustainability of its urgent and after-hours care, and inpatient care.

Urgent and After-Hours Care

8. Hauora Hokianga has historic agreements that include the provision of 24/7 urgent care services. However, due to workforce constraints, face-to-face after-hours urgent care services were stopped in August 2022. Over the past three years the service has been provided from 8.30am to 5pm weekdays and from 9am to 4pm weekends.
9. Health NZ has advised Hauora Hokianga that the urgent care clinic hours need to be extended to be open from 8.30am to 8pm on weekdays and 9am to 5pm on weekends. Telemedicine can supplement the face-to-face service during both normal hours and after hours. This approach is consistent with the after-hours and urgent care framework minimum service standard for a rural centre with a population of less than 40,000 people.

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12. With the closure of Rawene Pharmacy, Health NZ is also working with Hauora Hokianga to improve access to prescribed medicines in-hours and after hours. Currently, prescriptions are being filled by the pharmacy in Kaikohe and couriered back to Hauora Hokianga or by a pharmacy in Kaitaia and sent to a pharmacy depot arrangement for collection by the patient. As these pharmacies are out of area, urgent medicines are being supplied by Hauora Hokianga directly.

13. Hauora Hokianga does not provide emergency department level care. The nearest emergency departments are Bay of Islands and Kaitaia hospitals depending on where people are in the Hokianga. Whangārei Hospital provides a full range of clinical services for more critical or complex patients.

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[Redacted]

Next Steps

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[Redacted]

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