

Meeting with ProCare

Due to MO:	21 October 2025	Reference	HNZ00100593
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Martin Hefford, Director, Living Well, Planning Funding and Outcomes		
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Contact for further discussion			
Name	Position	Phone	1st contact
Martin Hefford	Director, Living Well, Planning Funding and Outcomes		x
Astuti Balam	Group Manager, Primary Care Living Well		

Attachments	
Appendix 1:	Biography of Bindi Norwell
Appendix 2:	March 2025 announcements – nursing and general practitioner primary care workforce investment

About the meeting

Purpose	Bindi Norwell, ProCare PHO CEO, has asked to meet with you to discuss workforce solutions.
Date	Thursday 23 October
Time	11.10am to 11.30am
Venue	EW 6.6.
Attendees	Bindi Norwell – CEO Note, biography attached as Appendix 1
Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora officials	Martin Hefford, Director Living Well, Planning, Funding and Outcomes
Media	No media are expected

Purpose

1. Bindi Norwell, ProCare CEO, has asked to meet with you to discuss workforce solutions. This meeting follows recent workforce announcements.
2. Note you previously met with Bindi on 18 March 2025 in her role as CEO of ProCare to discuss ProCare services, and the key challenges to primary healthcare.
3. You will also meet with Bindi immediately after this meeting in her role as Co-Chair Health Accelerator, with a focus on innovative solutions in primary healthcare system transformation.

Background and context

4. The ProCare Group delivers healthcare services directly and indirectly through their general practices that support nearly 700,000 enrolled patients across Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau. Their enrolled population is diverse, with large Pacific, South Asian and Māori populations.

5. The ProCare Group is made up of entities that include ProCare Health Limited (a Primary Health Organisation (PHO)) and ProCare Network Ltd (their corporate entity).
6. ProCare has a strong focus on collaborating for greater impact with expert support and integrated services, and has several formal partnerships, for instance:
 - Fresh Minds: mental health and wellbeing services across a wide range of areas delivered virtually or from three locations across Auckland;
 - CareHQ: online consultation with a New Zealand doctor or nurse;
 - Clinical Assessments Limited (CAL): a partnership between ProCare and East Health. Its flagship service is Primary Options for Acute Care (POAC), which is aligned with the Government's recent announcements to support extended primary and community care (EPCC);
 - Whakarongorau Aotearoa (Homecare Medical) digital telehealth services: offers free health, mental health, addictions and COVID-19 support free of charge 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year;
 - Exchange: matches buyers and sellers of practices and assists with practice ownership transition;
 - Elevate: offers a flexible practice purchase pathway supporting the future generation of healthcare business ownership. ProCare owns five practices through Elevate;
 - Health Accelerator (HA): a collaborative innovation hub for fast-tracking the development of digital solutions and AI in primary care across New Zealand. HA is a joint venture between ProCare and three of the country's large primary care networks: Pegasus, Pinnacle and Tū Ora Compass Health.

Primary Care Workforce Initiatives

7. Health NZ is making a multi-year investment in strengthening the primary care workforce through the Primary Care Tactical Action Plan (PCTAP) (HNZ00098099 refers). PCTAP provides significant new workforce development opportunities for the primary and community sector, focused on GPs and Nurses to support workforce growth, capability development and improved access to care across the country.

Key Investment Areas

- Graduate Registered Nurse (RN) Employment Incentives
Funding for primary care employers to recruit up to 400 graduate RNs annually in primary care settings;
- RN Primary Care Scholarships
Provision of 120 scholarships per year for postgraduate study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Prescribing or towards Nurse Practitioner to encourage and support RNs entering primary care;
- Nurse Practitioner Training Support Scheme (NPTSS)
Tailored, wraparound support for 120 Nurse Practitioner candidates annually, enabling advanced clinical roles in community settings;
- NZREX Primary Care Pathway
Targeted support for overseas-trained doctors to undertake prevocational training in

primary care settings over 2025 and 2026 to gain New Zealand registration and enter the primary care workforce;

- **General Practice Education Programme (GPEP)**
Additional funding to expand and strengthen the GPEP, ensuring a robust pipeline of General Practitioners. Vocational training through GPEP takes a minimum of three years to complete, but currently only the first year of training is funded. Funding is being increased for GPEP to ensure it is supported like other medical specialist training programmes.

Psychology Internship Hub

8. In 2024, the Psychology Intern Hub model expanded into Primary Care services with Fresh Minds hosting the Hub within their services. The Hub model builds capacity for psychology intern training, as it provides funding for five internships (clinical psychology and health psychology). Reports from Fresh Minds demonstrate a positive experience for all involved in their Hub and has led to interns gaining registration after successfully completing their internship year.
9. Fresh Minds is supportive of the Psychology Assistant role and works with the Mentally Well team on the Psychology Assistant initiative.

Ongoing Allied Health & Nursing Workforce Development

10. Additional workforce development funding continues to support postgraduate education and training for allied health in the primary and community setting. The focus is on enabling qualifications that extend clinical capability, such as prescribing pharmacists, to improve access and quality of care.

Rural Training Hubs

11. The first rural training hub was launched in South Taranaki in September, with three more to follow. These hubs aim to attract and retain frontline workforce in rural areas by creating stronger links between local services, universities, and training providers, so students and staff can learn and work in the community bringing health worker education closer to home and:
 - Promote interdisciplinary training
 - Enhance workforce retention in rural communities
 - Strengthen local health service delivery

Regulatory Developments

12. Consultation is underway on proposed amendments to:
 - Medicines (Designated Prescribers — Registered Nurses) Regulations 2016
 - Schedule 1A of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1977.
13. These changes propose expanding the range of medicines that RN prescribers can access, improving timely treatment and care delivery in primary settings.

Expanding Scope of Primary Care

14. Health NZ is enabling primary and community care teams — including GPs and extended workforce roles — to deliver services traditionally provided in secondary care, such as:
 - Management of abnormal uterine bleeding;

• Administration of oncology infusions

15. This shift supports integrated care, reduces pressure on hospitals, and improves patient access to timely treatment.

Appendix 1: Biographical details

Bindi Norwell: Group Chief Executive Officer, ProCare

Bindi has more than 25 years' experience working across a range of sectors, including property, professional services, telecommunications and aviation.

Previously CEO of the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ), Bindi has extensive commercial and leadership experience, is strategic and supports collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

Bindi has been Chief Executive Officer of ProCare since 2021. She has a passion for health and relishes the opportunity to apply her strategic and leadership strengths to improving the health outcomes for all New Zealanders, with a key focus on equity, digital transformation and putting people at the centre of the health experience. Bindi has also been Co-Chair of Health Accelerator since July 2025, is a board member of CareHQ and holds an MBA from Monash University.

Appendix 2: March 2025 announcements – nursing and general practitioner primary care workforce investment

In March 2025, Ministerial announcements covered a set of initial primary care initiatives focused on improving health outcomes and ensuring New Zealanders have access to timely, quality primary healthcare.

The focus of these initiatives is to make it easier for people to see a doctor or nurse at their local GP clinic in a timely manner – and, if they can't, to access alternative options.

Enhanced capitation

General practice will receive a \$285 million uplift over three years. This is on top of the capitation uplift which general practice receives annually.

This funding will incentivise general practices to provide more services and improve access to primary care appointments for New Zealanders. There will be additional service requirements and performance-based payments with this funding.

Workforce investment

Other aspects of the announcements in March include funding to expand training placements for doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners, and to create faster, more supportive pathways for internationally-trained professionals to join the workforce. These efforts to increase the primary care workforce are part of a broader commitment to building a stronger, more responsive primary care health system.

Nursing workforce:

\$34.2 million for increased nurse practitioner training over five years. This will mean nurse practitioners will be able to contribute even more to health care in communities through their role providing complex care to patients and prescribe medicines. This helps to reduce workforce pressures in primary and community health care.

\$21.6 million over four years for advanced tertiary education opportunities for up to 120 primary care registered nurses a year. This will encourage more primary care nurses to upskill and pursue advanced education, including registered nurse prescriber training. Better professional pathways for nurses also makes primary care a more attractive place to work.

Increasing graduate nurses in primary care by up to 400 nurses a year, incentivised by up to \$15,000 per nurse in urban areas, and up to \$20,000 per nurse in rural areas. This helps attract more registered nurses into primary care, supporting better outcomes for patients.

General practitioner workforce:

Increased medical school placements by 25 each year, to a total of 100. This will mean more doctors will be entering the health workforce from 2031, helping reduce New Zealanders' wait times for treatment.

\$23.3 million over four years to train up to 50 New Zealand-trained graduate doctors a year in primary care. Graduate doctors who are interested in primary care will be given an opportunity early in their careers to follow that interest. Placements in primary care settings mean doctors connect into those communities, can quickly put their skills to use, and are more likely to stay in those settings.

Supporting 100 more international-trained doctors to undertake their pre-vocational training and gain full registration via a primary care pathway 2025 and 2026. This supports overseas-trained doctors living in New Zealand who are willing to work in primary care – but can't, because there aren't enough training opportunities.

Since March 2025, you have announced a series of initiatives, including increasing the number of GPs in primary care. This includes:

- An increase in the number of training placements for doctors at medical schools by a further 25 each year;
- Up to 50 New Zealand-trained graduate doctors a year to train in primary care settings.