

Speaking at Health NZ CMO Meeting, 30 October 2025

Due to MO:	28 October 2025	Reference	HNZ00100251
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Dr Richard Sullivan, Executive National Director – Clinical		
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Proactive Release:	This title is not proposed by Health NZ for proactive release		

Contact for phone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard	National Chief Medical Officer, Health New Zealand		x

Attachments

Appendix 1: Runsheet and location map

Appendix 2: Full Agenda of Health NZ CMO meeting (2 days)

Appendix 3: Attendees list and biographies

Appendix 4: Supplementary information about the Health NZ Clinical Senate and Board

Appendix 5: Speaking Points

Appendix 5 has been withheld in full.

About the event

Purpose	You have accepted an invitation to speak at the regular (biannual) face to face meeting of the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of all Health New Zealand Districts. The purpose of this meeting is for the group to share updates, learning, and undertake professional development as clinical leaders
Date	Thursday 30 October 2025
Time	10-10:45am
Venue	Room 103, Ko Awatea Centre, Middlemore Hospital, Auckland
Expected attendees	<p>Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard, National CMO, Event Host</p> <p>Cathy Anderson, Executive Assistant to Helen Stokes-Lampard, Event Organiser</p> <p>Dr Vanessa Thornton, Group Director Operations, Counties Manukau</p> <p>Dr Dale Bramley, CEO of Health New Zealand (remote attendance only)</p> <p>Dr Andrew Connolly, Vice Chair of the Board of Health New Zealand,</p> <p>Morag McDowell, Health and Disability Commissioner</p> <p>CMOs of all the districts</p> <p>It is possible that other speakers may arrive early in time to hear the address. This includes:</p> <p>Joan Simeon, CEO of the Medical Council of New Zealand</p> <p>Biographies of key attendees and a detailed list of the CMOs are provided in appendix 3.</p>
Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora representatives	As above
Media	No media invited – this is a private, closed event
Talking points	Please refer to Appendix 5

Background

1. This event briefing provides you with information to support your attendance and participation at the biannual, in-person meeting of the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of all in Health NZ districts.
2. A CMO is a senior medical official (the most senior in their defined constituency) who provides leadership and advises on public health matters, either at a national, regional or district level.
3. This event convenes all CMOs from the 20 districts nationwide, providing an opportunity to connect, share updates and exchange knowledge.
4. The purpose of the meeting is to enhance the expertise of this dynamic group of medical leaders, foster meaningful discussions and facilitate the exploration of new ideas. It also supports ongoing learning, professional development and advancement as clinical leaders. At the last meeting of this group, on the 8th and 9th of May 2025, the then Commissioner, Dr Lester Levy, attended.
5. While the CMO meeting runs for two days (30 and 31 October 2025), your allocated time is 45 minutes on the morning of the first day. A detailed run sheet of your time attending the CMO meeting is provided in **Appendix 1**. The full Agenda for the entire two-day meeting is provided in **Appendix 2**.
6. This is a private, closed event, with no media present. The format is intended to be high-trust and professional to stimulate discussion, generate ideas and promote personal development.
7. The CMOs are a diverse, intelligent group with a great range of frontline insights. You will have met several of them during your visits to the various districts.
8. Some new CMOs have recently joined the group who you may not have yet had the chance to meet. In particular:
 - a) Dr Nejat Zengelou, an International Medical Graduate from the USA with clinical expertise in HIV Medicine, he began as CMO at Tairāwhiti/Gisborne in mid-September;
 - b) Dr Laura Chapman the CMO at Waitemata, succeeding Dr Jonathan Christiansen, who finished as a CMO to take up leading the Clinical Senate;
 - c) Dr Geoff Green as interim CMO at Counties Middlemore, following Andrew Connolly's new role as Board Vice Chair.
9. Biographies of the key attendees (as indicated in the cover page) and a detailed list of the CMOs are provided in **Appendix 3**.

Discussion

10. The following section introduces suggested topics to guide your speech and discussion. There is additional background material at **Appendix 4** concerning the Clinical Senate and Health NZ Board.
11. Your speech (speaking points provided in **Appendix 5**) is an opportunity to focus on

shared priorities and foster a mutually beneficial genuine partnership with the CMOs in this complex environment.

12. The CMOs would also be interested in hearing:
 - a) Your priorities for Health NZ in the coming year;
 - b) Ways in which you would like the CMOs to engage with your office and these priorities.
13. Speaking points have been prepared and are included in this briefing as **Appendix 5**.
14. We also invite you to pose questions to the CMOs during the discussion time, as well as to respond to questions.

Health Targets

15. Health targets are now at the heart of Health NZ's strategy and operation, driving much of the work and decision-making for CMOs across the country. Health NZ wants to drive the message that targets are not just metrics, but a shared vision for a better health system.
16. As clinical leaders, CMOs play a pivotal role in translating these priorities into action at the frontline, ensuring that every district is working towards the same goals. Their expertise and insights are essential for identifying barriers, innovating solutions and delivering the results that matter most to patients. To achieve lasting progress, it is vital that CMOs are not only aware of the targets but truly believe in their value and the positive change they can bring.
17. Bringing CMOs on board and making them partners in this journey will help foster a culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement. By engaging clinical leaders in the development, implementation and evaluation of health targets, we can ensure that these goals are meaningful, achievable and supported by those who know the system best. This collaborative approach will empower CMOs to lead with purpose, inspire their teams and drive real improvements in patient care.
18. Of particular interest are any next steps regarding health targets that are relevant to announce to the CMOs.
19. We invite you to consider speaking to:
 - a) The importance of health targets in shaping the future of Health NZ and improving patient outcomes;
 - b) How CMOs' leadership and frontline experience are critical to achieving these targets;
 - c) The need for CMOs to be active partners in the journey, believing in the targets,

understanding their impact, and helping to shape how they are delivered;

d) Ways in which you and your office will support CMOs to engage with and deliver on health targets.

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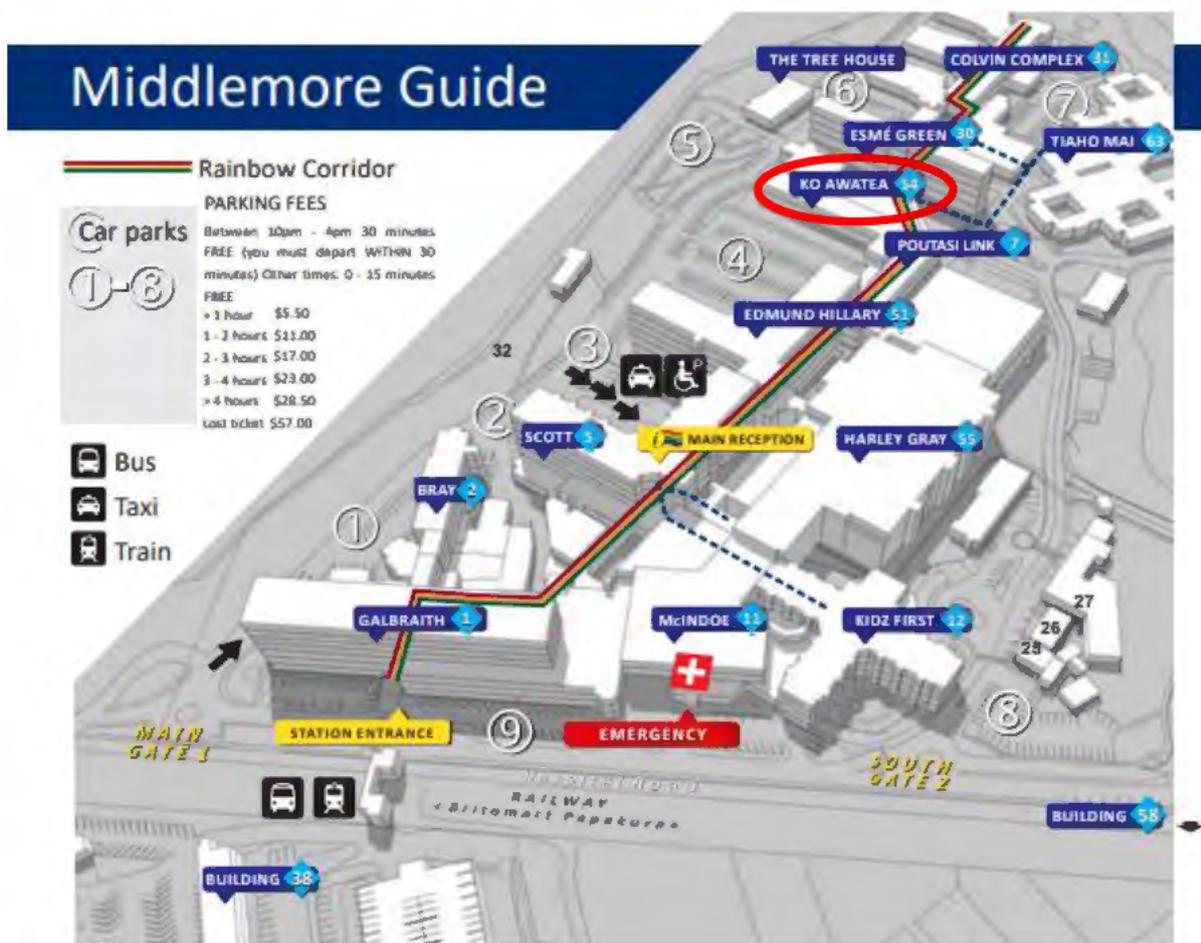
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Appendix 1: Runsheet and location map

Time	Details	Minister's Office notes
10:00 - 10:10	Formal welcome Welcome to be led by Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard, Dr Vanessa Thornton, Dr Geoff Green Counties Manukau CMO and local cultural leader Muru Maipi.	
10:10 - 10:20	Minister's address	
10:20 - 10:40	Q+A	
10:40-10:45	Close & Minister departs	



Appendix 2: Full Agenda of Health NZ CMO meeting

DAY 1 – Thursday 30th October 2025

Ko Awatea Centre (Room 103), Middlemore Hospital

- 09:30 *Registration, Coffee, Meet & Mingle - Formal Agenda to commence at 10am*
- 10:00** **Opening Session/ Mihi Whakatau (Muru Maipi)**
*Dr Vanessa Thornton GDO & Dr Geoff Green CMO Counties Manukau
Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard – National CMO*
- Minister Simeon Brown, Minister of Health**
Address and Q&A
- Dr Dale Bramley, CEO Health New Zealand (Health NZ) – joining remotely**
to present to the group 10:45am
Andrew Connolly, Deputy Chair of Board (Health NZ)
- 11:15 **Joan Simeon, CEO Medical Council New Zealand (MCNZ)**
Facilitated discussion on Training Site Accreditation.
- 11:50 **Kerry Gordon, GM Recruitment and Attraction (Health NZ)**
& Vanessa Aplin, National Recruitment Operations Lead
International Recruitment update (& informal discussions 1-2-1 over lunch)
- 12:00-13:00** **Lunch & Networking**
- 13:00 **Morag McDowell, Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC)**
- 13:45 **Sustainability for CMOs**
Three Horizons Workshop: Defining CMO Action and Accountability
*Rick Lomax, Head of Sustainability (Health NZ)
Dr Rob Burrell, Sustainability Clinical Lead (Health NZ) – (virtual attendance)*
- 14:30 **Laura Aileone & Brendan Marshall. An update on Rural Generalism**
- 14:45** **Afternoon tea**
- 15:10 **Dr Nick Baker, National Clinical Chief Health Service Delivery Planning -**
Health Service Delivery Planning and Service Levels – an update
- 15:30 **Digital Services and Health X AI foundry update followed by Q&A**
*Sonny Taite, National Chief Information Security Officer
Lara Hopley, National Chief Clinical Informatics Officer D&D*
- 17:00** **Wrap up of day and close**
- 18:30** **Group Dinner – Central Auckland**

DAY 2 – Friday 31st October 2025

Ko Awatea Centre (Room 103), Middlemore Hospital

- 08.30 *Coffee/Meet and Mingle for prompt 9 am start*
- 09:00 **Richard Sullivan**, Executive National Director, Clinical (Health NZ) – update on clinical matters, targets and future direction, plus Q&A
- 09:40 **Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard** – CMOs group workplan 2026
- 10.00- 10:45 **Dr Leeanne Fisher**, National Clinical Chief Mental Health -. **CMOs to Join the NZ FLCP Committee National forum conference (same venue) to a 'world café' session with liaison psychiatrists.**

Coffee Break 10:45-11:15

- 11:15-12 **Dr Sarah Jackson**, National Clinical Chief for QPS **Quality and Patient Safety** update

- 12:00- 12:45 **Media 101 for CMOs part 1 – Sophie Lowery**

12:45 - 1:30 Lunch break

- 13:30 **Media 101 part 2 - Sophie Lowery**
Our experiences of handling the media – Sophie Lowery with Helen Stokes-Lampard and Richard Sullivan. Then open Q&A – *“everything you wanted to ask about working with the media and professional comms but were too afraid to ask...”*
- 14:30 Hold for late breaking items – **Waikato Medical School** training placements discussion with John Snook and Julia Jones
- 15:00 Wrap up and summary of actions, next steps and learning
- 15:30 **End of Day** - *conclude by 3.30pm to allow for travel back home*

Appendix 3: Attendee list and biographies

Key Attendees

Name	Biography
<p>Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard, National CMO, Event Host</p>	<p>Professor Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard is an accomplished medical leader with extensive experience in the UK's NHS, including roles as Non-Executive Director at NHS England Board, Professor of Medical Education, and frontline GP. She still does clinical sessions as a GP in Auckland (Marina Medical, Half Moon Bay – in your constituency)</p> <p>Dame Helen chaired the UK Academy of Medical Colleges during the Covid-19 pandemic and was awarded a DBE in 2022 for her services to General Practice. Dame Helen has also led national advisory groups on AI, Social Prescribing, Genomics and was founding Chair of the National Academy for Social Prescribing. She has been national CMO for Health NZ since October 2024 and is the host for the CMO meeting.</p>
<p>Cathy Anderson, Executive Assistant to Helen Stokes-Lampard, Event Organiser</p>	<p>Cathy Anderson is the current Executive Assistant to the National Chief Medical Officer and National Chief of Mental Health and Addictions and is responsible for organising and coordinating this meeting.</p> <p>Cathy has over 30 years of experience in the health sector in various coordination and executive assistance roles, previously at BOP and Waikato as well as coordination of Clinical Governance, Mortality Review Coordinator and Complaints.</p>
<p>Dr Vanessa Thornton, Group Director Operations, Counties Manukau Health</p>	<p>Vanessa Thornton is a Group Director - Operations, Hospitals and Specialist Services for Counties Manukau Health. She is an Emergency Medicine Specialist. She has previously acted as the Northern Region Acting Deputy Chief Executive, and Clinical Director of Emergency Medicine at Counties Manukau Health.</p>
<p>Dr Dale Bramley, CEO of Health New Zealand</p>	<p>Dr Dale Bramley is the CEO of Health NZ. Most recently he was the National Director for Service Improvement and Innovation for Health New Zealand, Dr Bramley was previously the Chief Executive of Waitematā District Health Board for 11 years – serving a population of around 625,000 people and a staff of 8,700.</p> <p>He is a public health medicine specialist and experienced senior leader within the New Zealand health sector. He has previously served as Chair of New Zealand's Health Quality & Safety Commission. Dr Bramley is also an Adjunct Professor at Auckland University of Technology. He has tribal affiliations to Ngā Puhī.</p>
<p>Dr Andrew Connolly, Vice Chair of the Board of Health New Zealand,</p>	<p>Dr Andrew Connolly is a general and colorectal surgeon with a distinguished clinical background and is currently the Chief Medical Officer at Counties Manukau. He is also currently the Chair of the Health Workforce and System Efficiencies Committee, a former Chair of the Medical Council, and former member of the Health Quality and Safety Commission. He has also served as a Deputy Commissioner and Observer for various District Health Boards.</p>
<p>Morag McDowell, Health and Disability Commissioner</p>	<p>Morag McDowell, Health and Disability Commissioner, began her term in September 2020 after serving nearly 13 years as a Coroner based in Auckland. She was formerly a Crown Prosecutor, Director of</p>

	<p>Proceedings for the Health and Disability Commissioner's Office, and a Senior Legal Adviser at Crown Law.</p> <p>Since completing her Master's of Laws degree, her legal practice has had a strong focus on healthcare law, and she has appeared in different courts and tribunals on a variety of health-related litigation. She has also lectured and published on a range of medico-legal issues.</p>
<p>Joan Simeon, CE of the Medical Council of New Zealand</p>	<p>Joan was appointed Chief Executive of the Medical Council of New Zealand in 2017, having spent the previous 14 years in various senior executive roles at Council. Joan holds a Master's in Public Management and a post-graduate qualification in Dispute Resolution. Joan is the Chair of the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA).</p> <p>Joan has a strong interest in using medical regulatory levers, alongside influence to improve professionalism, ensure competence and ultimately public safety. Joan is an advocate for equity in healthcare and sees the regulator as having a key role in achieving this</p>

List of District Chief Medical Officers (CMOs)

Each district has at least one CMO, with others having more than one with portfolios or associate arrangements. Te Waipounamu and Te Manawa Taki have one CMO who acts as the regional lead (highlighted blue).

Region	District	Name	Specialty/other role	Attending
Northern	Northland	Dr Jennifer Walker	Renal Physician	Y
	Waitematā	Dr Laura Chapman	General Medicine	Y
	Auckland	Dr Carl Eagleton	Endocrinologist (Diabetes)	Y
	Counties Manukau	Dr Geoff Green <i>(interim)</i>	Geriatrician	Y
Midland Te Manawa Taki	Waikato	Dr Margaret Fisher <i>(Secondary & Tertiary Care)</i>	General Physician (Renal)	Y
	Waikato	Dr Julia Carr <i>(Primary Care)</i>	GP & Public Health Physician	Y
	Lakes	Dr Gerrie Synman	General Surgery	Y
	Bay of Plenty	Dr Kate Grimwade	General Medicine Physician (Infectious Diseases)	Y
	Taranaki	Dr Greg Simmons	Medical Officer of Health	N
	Taranaki	Dr Lisa Williams <i>(Associate CMO)</i>	Clinical Management / former Orthopaedic surgeon	Y
	Tairāwhiti	Dr Nejat Zengelou,	HIV Medicine	Y

Central Te Ikaroa	Whanganui	Dr Nathalie de Vries	Paediatrician	Y
	Hawke's Bay	Dr Benjamin Pearson	Paediatrician	Y
	MidCentral	Dr Claire Hardie	Radiation Oncologist	Y
	MidCentral	Dr Grant Highstead (Associate CMO)	Emergency Physician	Y
	Wairarapa	Dr Steven Earnshaw	Orthopaedic Surgeon & Chief Informatics Officer	Y
	Capital and Coast / Hutt Valley	Dr Andre Cromhout	Emergency Physician	Y
South Island Te Waipounamu	Nelson Marlborough	Dr Nick Baker (Currently seconded)	Paediatrician	Y
	Nelson Marlborough	Dr Steve Low (Covering Dr Baker)	Anaesthetist	Y
	Canterbury	Dr Alan Pithie	Medical Specialist	Y
	West Coast	Dr Brendan Marshall	Rural Generalist & Obstetrician	Y
	South Canterbury	Dr Cecilia Smith Hamel (Job share)	Consultant Psychiatrist	Y
	South Canterbury	Dr Magda Sakowska (Job share)	General Surgery	Y
	Southern	Dr David Gow	CMO / Neurologist	Y

Other invited attendees

Name	Role
Dr Leeanne Fisher	National Chief Mental Health and Addiction
Dr Rawiri Jansen	Diabetes Network Co-Lead & Clinical advisor to CMO Tairāwhiti
Dr Elana Curtis	Interim Chief Medical Officer, Clinical Business Unit, Hauora Māori Services
Dr Maria Poynter	Chief Public Health Clinical Officer & Director Transformation
Dr Lara Hopley	National Chief Informatics Officer
Dr Sarah Jackson	National Chief Quality & Patient Safety
Laura Aileone	National Chief Clinical Change – Rural Generalist Programme
Dr Rob Burrell	Sustainability Clinical Lead
Rick Lomax	Head of Sustainability Health NZ

Appendix 4: Supplementary information about the Health NZ Clinical Senate and Board

35. The following additional points may also be relevant for inclusion in your speech:

Appointment of the Health New Zealand Board

36. You have previously spoken to the role of the new board to refocusing Health New Zealand on patient outcomes, driving progress on health targets such as reducing waitlists, and ensuring accountability for timely, quality care.
37. The reestablishment of the Board marks a shift from the Commissioner-led model to a governance structure designed to foster greater accountability and engagement with clinical leaders at both national and district levels. We invite you to consider speaking to:
 - a) How you expect the fully appointed Board will operate in practice, including its approach to governance, oversight, and engagement with clinical leaders.
 - b) How you expect the Board will work with CMOs and other clinical leaders to ensure frontline insights inform decision-making and resource allocation.
 - c) What this change means for CMOs and other clinical leaders in shaping priorities and delivering on health targets.
 - d) Any opportunities that exist for CMOs to engage with you as the minister and contribute to the ongoing development of Health New Zealand's strategic direction.

Launch of the New Zealand Clinical Senate

38. The New Zealand Clinical Senate (NZCS) is a multidisciplinary group established under the Health Delivery Plan, to provide constructive, independent, impartial strategic advice on system-wide issues that affect quality, affordable and efficient patient care.
39. Over 208 expressions of interest were received and 82 members appointed, plus a co-lead from each of the National Clinical Networks. Members represent a wider range of professions, specialities and areas of practice, across the whole health system and geographic locations. There is an ongoing commitment to continue evolving the Senate to broaden expertise over time.
40. The inaugural NZCS meeting was in Auckland on the 10 October 2025, with the topic for discussion; "Unlocking our clinical potential: identifying and addressing barriers to efficient delivery of quality healthcare."
41. At this first meeting, there were strong and consistent themes of:
 - a) enhancing and implementing strategies in prevention of illness,
 - b) growing and supporting a workforce that can work effectively at 'top of scope' and in new models of care,
 - c) investing in digital technology for both connectivity and efficient working.
42. We invite you to speak further to some of your priorities for Health NZ in the coming year and whether there is any alignment with the themes discussed at the senate.