

Health Workforce Implementation Plan



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Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

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Context

The Health Workforce Plan 2024 and Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan 2024 – 2027 set out the actions Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora is taking to strengthen our frontline health workforce and deliver on the Government’s priorities as laid out in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024 – 2027.

This document sets out the elements of the Health Workforce Plan 2024 and Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan 2024 – 2027 that Health NZ expects to deliver in FY2025/26. These are oriented around five focus areas in our current context, which cut across the five priorities in the Plan and align to Health NZ’s commitments to delivering on targets and the Primary Care Tactical Action Plan.

Health NZ’s focus for 2025/26

As set out in the **New Zealand Health Plan | Te Pae Waenga**, Health NZ’s focus through to 2027 is on delivering:

- *Timely access to quality care* – supported by a skilled, capable workforce.
- *On five health targets* – faster cancer treatment; improved immunisation; shorter stays in emergency departments; shorter wait times for first specialist assessment; and shorter wait times for elective treatment (with a sixth target, shorter waits for general practice, taking effect from 1 July 2026).
- *On five mental health and addiction targets* – faster access to specialist mental health and addiction services; faster access to primary mental health and addiction services; shorter mental health and addiction-related stays in emergency departments; increased mental health and addiction workforce development; and a strengthened focus on prevention and early intervention.

Alongside these targets, Health NZ is committed to delivering on strategic Government initiatives, including the Primary Care Tactical Action Plan – which is focused on giving New Zealanders better, faster access to primary care when they need it.



Focus areas for 2025/26

Health NZ is committed to delivering a range of workforce activities – including the actions set out in the **Health Workforce Plan 2024** and **Mental Health and Addiction Plan 2024 – 2027** – over the three years to July 2027.

A detailed outline of how we intend to progress each initiative under these plans is set out at Annex 1. Actions being progressed in 2025/26 are funded for this financial year.

To focus our action and investment for 2025/26, we've identified five **focus areas** for implementation this year – which will be our top priorities for delivery. These focus areas emphasise workforce actions which are essential to the New Zealand Health Plan, including delivering the Primary Care Tactical Action Plan and meeting targets:

1. Primary Care

The Government has a focus on making primary care more accessible for New Zealanders, and has made significant new investments in primary care – including through the Primary Care Tactical Action Plan and recent investments in the GP Education Programme (GPEP). We're focused on rolling these investments out to ensure faster, better access to primary care for New Zealanders, and a flourishing primary care workforce.

Key initiatives:

- Action 2.1 - Adapt Specialist Models of Care
- Action 3.5 - Grow Our GP and Community Medical Workforce

2. Mental Health and Addiction

Off the back of New Zealand's first Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan, published in 2024, we have made good progress on key initiatives including funding more clinical internships, expanding our workforce through developing new roles, like the Psychology Assistant, and peer support workers are now at five of our busiest emergency departments. However, we still have more to do to achieve the workforce goals set in in the Plan. Supported by new funding through Budget 25, our focus for 2025/26 continues to be on sustainable mental health and addiction services across workforces.

Key initiatives:

- Action 3.1 - Expand Our Foundational Workforces
- Action 3.2 Establish and Grow Assistant Roles.
- Action 4.2 - Expand Medical Training in Vulnerable Specialties
- Action 4.3 - Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity

3. Retention and Training

Growing our workforce can only achieve so much if we can't retain and develop our people over the course of a career in health. For 2025/26 we're focused on adding regional capacity for medical, nursing and allied specialists, and improving retention of resident doctors, which will help value and support our health workforce.

Key initiatives:

- Action 4.2 – Expand Medical Training in Vulnerable Specialities
- Action 4.5 – Create Private Training Capacity
- Action 4.7 – Keep Our People While Training Overseas

4. Rural Workforce

Rural communities face significant barriers to recruiting the workforces they need for service sustainability, and are a significant Government priority. Our focus is on tackling the workforce drivers of postcode lottery – particularly on establishing rural training hubs to grow by-rural for-rural health workforces – so that our rural communities can rely on having a sufficient health workforce into the future.

Key initiatives:

- Action 5.7 - Establish Rural Training Hubs
- Action 5.8 - Support Workforce into Rural Settings
- Action 5.9 - Increase Rural Hospital Medical Specialist Training and Support

5. Keeping Our People Safe

Physical and psychological safety are essential for our people, who too often face violence or aggression at work. We're focused on protecting our people, including through delivering investments in Health NZ security services funded through Budget 24, and helping them manage clinical violence safely.

Key initiatives:

- Action 2.5 - Launch Flagship Services to Keep Staff Well at Work
- Action 2.6 - Keep Our People Safe at Work

Annex 1

Health Workforce Plan Implementation Summary

Priority 1

Get our workforce basics right

Make sure training and recruitment pathways are producing the number of people we need; and get the simple stuff right for our people, like student retention and usable systems.

The following tables outline the actions and milestones for 2025/26. Delivery of some targets will also continue into later financial years (FY). Financial years run from 1 July to 30 June the next year.

TARGET ALIGNMENT KEY

						
Faster cancer treatment	Shorter wait times for elective treatment	Shorter stays in emergency departments (ED)	Shorter wait times for first specialist assessment	Increased mental health and addiction workforce development	Increase and retain doctors (PCTAP)	Increase and retain nurses (PCTAP)

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	1.1 Secure Educational Training Capacity Secure 100 new training places for students in tertiary education programmes.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine where growth is needed (will include sonography, radiation therapy, oral health, therapy, podiatry). Identify costings for additional FTE and confirm plans for training growth with relevant tertiary education providers. 			
	1.2 Boost Health NZ's Placement Capacity Expand and improve capacity for allied and specialist nursing placements.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New national clinical placement and access agreement for nursing, allied health, scientific and technical and midwifery professions between Health NZ and its partner tertiary education providers. Undertake inaugural annual national Relationship Manager meetings with health and education. Agree a nationally-consistent Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) framework agreed with resources publicly available. Establish regional DEU networks. 	 	 	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
 	1.2.1 Boost Health NZ’s Placement Capacity Continue expanding and improving capacity for allied and specialist nursing placements, including for anaesthetic technicians, oral health therapists, medical imaging technologists, podiatrists, cardiac sonography and cancer nursing.	✓		
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve and execute a new national clinical placement and access agreement for nursing, allied health, scientific and technical and midwifery professions. Agree a nationally consistent framework for nursing Dedicated Education Units (DEU). Establish a regional network. 	✓		
	1.2.2 Boost Health NZ’s Placement Capacity (Medical) Expand Health NZ’s capacity for medical training to meet recent increases to medical school capacity and planned new medical school capacity.	✓		
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an Expression of Interest process to identify practices and districts for additional placements for PGY1 domestic graduates. Compile a list of available placements by priority in rural hospitals, other hospitals, and primary care settings for the 2026/27 intake. 	✓		
	1.3 Match Tertiary Training Capacity to Future Need Review all health system training volumes for which we have modelling against expected workforce demand by 2035; and outline required tertiary training growth to meet demand.			✓
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop undergraduate education models for each major workforce or workforce group, integrated with workforce planning models, to incorporate expected tertiary graduations. Develop vocational education models for relevant workforces integrated with workforce planning models. Model required domestic tertiary intakes to achieve workforce sustainability. 		✓	✓ ✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>1.4 Streamline Tertiary Training Programmes (Nursing) In conjunction with the tertiary education sector support access to standardised pathways for enrolled nurses to complete a Bachelor of Nursing (BN).</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathway and criteria for Enrolled Nurse entry to Bachelor of Nursing - lead and developed by tertiary education providers. Nationally align transition papers (science and pharmacology) to enable Enrolled Nurse entry to Bachelor of Nursing programmes – lead and developed by tertiary education providers. 		✓	
	<p>1.5 Improve Use of Simulation Establish a national, interprofessional simulation training service for Health NZ teams, to support and deliver consistent, high-quality simulation-based learning.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a stocktake of resources used for simulation across the motu, including but not limited to equipment and staff. Identify strategic opportunities and simulation priorities for further development. 		✓	✓
	<p> 1.6 Improve Student Placements Launch a new system for student placements to coordinate capacity nationwide and better allow students to indicate placement preferences (including where and when they are placed).</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch pilot digital coordination tool with Anaesthetic Technician Placements. Establish an Interim Placement hub support service. Evaluate pilot with Anaesthetic Technician placements. Commence Phase 2 digital tool development. 		✓	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>1.9 Improve National Workforce Planning Improve workforce planning, including by reviewing our models of current and future supply, and enabling scenario and demand-based modelling of workforce supply. Develop a national map and adopt national planning of medical training volumes, so we can align future increases in training numbers to specialties where need is greatest.</p>			
	<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a prototype workforce planning tool. • Refine prototype tool using expert input through a continuous improvement process. • Analyse workforces where population-based demand models are likely to materially deviate from future demand. • Tailor workforce planning tool to ~3 specific services to support workforce planning, including at least one primary and community care setting. • Develop bespoke demand models for workforces where we anticipate population-based demand models are likely to materially deviate from future demand. • Establish a national working group to progress workforce issues related to psychiatry training. • Complete a stocktake of our current psychiatry workforce (including trainees) to allow national psychiatry training plan to be developed. 	  		   

Priority 2

Work differently for productivity and better care

Improve health outcomes by ensuring health services are productive in the investment of facilities, technology, equipment, medicines, and workforces. Productivity gains will enhance the clinical quality and safety of care.

The following tables outline the actions and milestones for 2025/26. Delivery of some targets will also continue into later financial years (FY). Financial years run from 1 July to 30 June the next year.

TARGET ALIGNMENT KEY

						
Faster cancer treatment	Shorter wait times for elective treatment	Shorter stays in emergency departments (ED)	Shorter wait times for first specialist assessment	Increased mental health and addiction workforce development	Increase and retain doctors (PCTAP)	Increase and retain nurses (PCTAP)

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
 	2.1 Adapt Specialist Models of Care Review models of care and service delivery models across priority specialist areas, including dermatology and radiology, and get started implementing improved models. Add SMO capacity to services that need it, to support innovation and sustainability, and to drive improved specialist models of care. Support growth in specialist nursing workforces.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new clinical capacity to services that need it, with a focus on performance against targets. Perform a stocktake on existing model of care change work currently underway to understand status quo. Identify priority areas for national model of care change. Commence clinically-led projects to shift national models of care in priority areas. Develop processes for model of care change, to support local teams to safely and efficiently adopt model of care changes. 		    	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>2.2 Establish Consistent Benefits of Employment Review all the services we provide Health NZ workers on our sites – including childcare and rural accommodation.</p>		✓	
	<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete stocktake across all districts. 		✓	
	<p>2.3 Improve Support for Progression Expand development opportunities for Health NZ workers in areas with less clear pathways today, including for orderlies, addiction roles and support roles.</p>		✓	
	<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kaiāwhina capabilities framework refined in September 2025 and a system for recognising prior learning agreed. Training gaps addressed with stackable skill standards and new micro-credentials by December 2025. Clear pathways for skill development and career advancement established by March 2026. 		✓ ✓ ✓	
	<p>2.4 Allow for More Flexible Rosters Implement digital rostering tools in place across New Zealand for more Health NZ frontline staff, to improve productivity and workforce deployment – both for our staff and our system. Adopt consistent rostering approaches for Health NZ staff who need flexibility, to make flexibility more accessible for our staff.</p>			✓
	<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analyse information gathered through stocktake. Develop nationally consistent principles and guidelines to support flexible rostering and consult with staff and other key stakeholders on these. Finalise nationally consistent principles and guidelines and communicate them out to the regions. 			✓ ✓ ✓
	<p>2.5 Launch Flagship Services to Keep Staff Well at Work Launch our Kaimahi Hauora Service and the Resident Doctors Support Service for staff wellbeing, and to support Health NZ workers to deliver safe, exceptional care.</p>		✓	
	<p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of six identified key national occupational health policies to ensure consistent practice across the country. Drive consistent local service delivery underpinned by national policies. 		✓ ✓	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	2.6 Keep Our People Safe at Work Deliver a protective security programme to keep frontline Health NZ staff safe, including delivering the ED Security Improvement Programme funded through Budget 2024.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund permanent ED security guard positions for eight priority EDs. • Make additional security guards available to all hospitals with EDs during periods of higher demand. • Deliver violence reduction training to security and ED staff at Waitākere, North Shore, Dunedin, Christchurch, Middlemore and Waikato Hospitals, in addition to Auckland City and Wellington Hospitals. • Roll out to remaining hospitals with EDs by June 2026. • Make <i>Prevention First</i> eLearning available to all front-facing staff. 		    	
	2.7 Strengthen Clinical and Service Leadership Invest in Health NZ’s clinical and service leadership to ensure compassionate, effective leadership practices across our services. Continue strengthening Health NZ’s clinical leadership structures, including clinical networks, our clinical senate, and clinical advisory groups.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage subject matter experts in the Health Leadership Development Programme. • Develop a pilot of first Health Leadership Development programmes. • Undertake further planning for strengthening clinical and service leadership. 		  	
	2.8 Make an Improved National Culture Real Roll out a national culture programme for Health NZ services to bring the NZ Health Charter to life, focused on how we work – with an evidence-based approach to how we make good decisions, work interprofessionally, and keep our staff psychologically and physically well.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement the <i>Respect at Work</i> programme. • Commence Health NZ’s Leadership Development Programme. 		 	

Priority 3

Keep people well, close to home through primary care

Bolster workforces in public health, primary care, and the community to keep New Zealanders healthier and reduce the load on hospitals through early intervention.

The following tables outline the actions and milestones for 2025/26. Delivery of some targets will also continue into later financial years (FY). Financial years run from 1 July to 30 June the next year.

TARGET ALIGNMENT KEY

						
Faster cancer treatment	Shorter wait times for elective treatment	Shorter stays in emergency departments (ED)	Shorter wait times for first specialist assessment	Increased mental health and addiction workforce development	Increase and retain doctors (PCTAP)	Increase and retain nurses (PCTAP)

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>3.1.2 Expand Our Foundational Workforces Fund 200 health workers in entry-level roles to obtain Level 3 or Level 4 health qualifications, including Level 4 training for 90 additional consumers, peer support, and lived experience (CPLSE) workers annually.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with a tertiary education provider to provide New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) Levels 2 – 4 health and wellbeing assessor / observer training. Partner with education providers to ensure NZQF Level 3 and 4 health qualification programs are accessible, flexible, and meet the needs of diverse learners. Establish a monitoring framework in December 2025 to track participant progress, qualification completion rates, and transitions into higher-level roles. Contract training providers contracted to fund enrolment fees for 90 Level 4 <i>NZ Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Peer Support)</i> places. Deliver a Diabetes Management Education programme to kaiāwhina working in Pacific providers. 			✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>3.1.3 Expand Our Foundational Workforces (Primary and Community Care) Support a wider range of roles to contribute to primary and community care, including extended care paramedics and physician assistants.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support paramedics to access paramedicine papers towards an extended care paramedicine qualification. Support pharmacists to access pharmacy papers towards postgraduate certificates or postgraduate diplomas. Support physiotherapists to access an advanced assessment paper. Develop a proposal for the role of physician associates in Health NZ-operated and funded services. 		✓	
	<p>3.2.1 Establish and Grow Assistant Roles Establish new allied health, scientific and technical assistant roles with associated models of care.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope a medical imaging assistant role (radiology assistant). Support establishment of dental assistant training programmes, including evaluating the potential for an oral health therapist pathway. Publish a national allied health, scientific and technical assistant position description across Health NZ. Fund earn-as-you-learn training for 120 kaiāwhina per year into enrolled nursing or allied roles. Deploy a footcare assistant pilot. 		✓	✓
	 <p>3.2.2 Establish and Grow Assistant Roles Work with tertiary education providers and the New Zealand Psychologists Board (NZPB) to establish a training programme for at least 20 psychology assistants per year.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract the New Zealand Psychologists Board in relation to the regulatory requirements for psychology assistants. Undertake procurement with tertiary education providers for development of a postgraduate diploma programme for training the psychology assistant workforce. Develop and accredit a qualification / programme with relevant Education NZ governing bodies. Work with unions and employers on guidance, supervision, placements and other requirements for the psychology assistant pathway. Have a first cohort of psychology assistants commence training in the 2026 academic year. 	✓	✓	✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	3.4.1 Improve Graduate Transitions (NESP) Expand early career supports for mental health nurses transitioning out of NESP training.			✓
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of interest for potential pilots being developed. 			✓
	3.4.2 Improve Graduate Transitions Incentivise primary and community healthcare employers to attract, recruit and support graduate registered nurses.			✓
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create employer eligibility criteria to underpin delivery of a supported first year of practice and associated application processes. • Deliver incentives to match graduate nurses with primary care opportunities. 		✓	✓
	3.5 Grow Our GP and Community Medical Workforce Establish a new primary care pathway for House Officers, offering 50% of runs in community settings.			✓
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and deliver a domestic primary care pathway for registration, with agreement from the Medical Council. 			✓
	3.5.1 Grow Our GP and Community Medical Workforce (Employer model) Health NZ to employ public health medicine (PHM) advanced trainee registrars and rural hospital medicine (RHM) registrars to smooth their employment pathways and reduce attrition.		✓	
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit public health medicine advanced trainees under a nationally agreed contract, and consistent employment arrangements. • Establish an evaluation framework for public health medicine advanced trainees. • Recruit rural hospital medicine registrars under a nationally agreed contract, and consistent employment arrangements. 		✓	✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	3.5.2 Grow Our GP and Community Medical Workforce (GPEP) Continue to target 300 GP trainees into the GP Education Programme (GPEP) as an annual intake.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm a preferred employment model for GPEP, and review and implement sustainable funding for GPEP2 and GPEP3. • Continue to target recruiting 300 GP trainees into the GPEP programme per year. • Support the development of new medical school clinical placements in line with business case processes. • Support community initiatives targeting local workforce sustainability in hard-to-staff areas. 		   	
	3.6.1 Bolster Maternity Care (Kai Amo Pōkai) Develop a maternity assistant role (Kai Amo Pōkai) to support midwifery capacity, and to staircase into undergraduate midwifery.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a nationally consistent position description and training package for a Kai Amo Pōkai role. • Develop a pathway for Kai Amo Pōkai into midwifery training programs with partners and training providers. • Identify initial roll out sites for Kai Amo Pōkai. • Establish Kai Amo Pōkai roles at pilot sites. 		   	
	3.7 Extend Scopes Through Training Continue to support nurse practitioner training, and work to revise our approach to nurse practitioner training with clinicians, providers of training and regulators for 2026.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund 121 registered nurses for the Nurse Practitioner Training Programme (NPTP) in 2025, including at least 61 specialising in primary care and up to 22 in mental health and addiction. • Procure a new nurse practitioner support scheme to replace the current NPTP. 		 	

Priority 4

Address workforce needs to hit targets

Target workforce growth to meet National Health Targets, ensuring shorter waits, shorter stays and faster treatment by having the necessary workforces in place.

The following tables outline the actions and milestones for 2025/26.. Delivery of some targets will also continue into later financial years (FY). Financial years run from 1 July to 30 June the next year.

TARGET ALIGNMENT KEY

						
Faster cancer treatment	Shorter wait times for elective treatment	Shorter stays in emergency departments (ED)	Shorter wait times for first specialist assessment	Increased mental health and addiction workforce development	Increase and retain doctors (PCTAP)	Increase and retain nurses (PCTAP)

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	4.1 Focus International Recruitment Target international recruitment investment at our most severe workforce demands, and areas of insufficient domestic supply.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree attraction campaigns for critical SMO workforces. Deliver candidates through the Oncology Campaign 2024/2025, progressing to district employment. Focus FY2025/26 investment on areas of need alongside raising Health NZ awareness internationally. 			
	4.2 Expand Medical Training in Vulnerable Specialties Offer employment to all New Zealand-trained new medical graduates from 2026, including international students who want to work in New Zealand.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ACE Process for RMOs to ensure that the processes are fair, reasonable and transparent and prioritise NZ-trained medical workforce. Complete a stocktake of current PGY1 positions and capacity including new opportunities for placement balancing training, supervision and service impacts. Develop a view of RMOs as part of the whole medical pipeline, considering medical graduate supply and forecast growth against speciality and district / regional demand. 			 

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>4.2.1 Expand Medical Training in Vulnerable Specialties (Funding) Establish a pool of funding for small, vulnerable specialties to support training sustainability – including dermatology, rheumatology and gynaecological oncology.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify long-list of initial priority specialties through engagement with Executive Regional Directors, clinical networks and clinical leadership. Confirm initial priority specialties and services, including anticipated patient impact and return on investment. Design an ‘early warning system’ to identify areas and causes of vulnerability before crises emerge. Determine funding pool and disperse funding to initial tranche of specialties. Confirm ongoing criteria for funding availability and how ‘early warning’ settings and systems inform preventative investment in service vulnerability. 			✓
	<p>4.2.4 Expand Medical Training in Vulnerable Specialties (Psychiatry) Grow to 50 psychiatry training roles in Health NZ services from 2025 onwards.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Clinical Directors and Directors of Training to maximise the number of candidates accepted into training positions. 			✓
	<p>4.3 Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity (Growing psychology intern roles) Establish 10 additional Health NZ clinical psychology intern roles in 2025; and 10 more in both 2026 and 2027 (for 30 total in 2027).</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underway in 2024 - 2025 academic year intake complete. Establish additional 10 clinical psychology roles per annum in both 2026 and 2027 (for 30 extra intern roles by 2027). 			✓
	<p>4.3.1 Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity (Increasing Post-graduate clinical psychological training) Encourage universities to increase post-graduate clinical psychological training capacity by 10 students in 2025; and a further 10 students in both 2026 and 2027 (for 30 total in 2027).</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underway in 2024 – 12 additional places added in post-graduate clinical psychology training for the 2025 academic year. Encourage universities to increase post-graduate clinical psychology training capacity in both 2026 and 2027 (for 30 extra students total by 2027). 			✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	4.3.2 Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity (Specialist Roles) Support an additional 110 specialist nurses, occupational therapists and social workers to undertake NESP training annually, from 2027 onwards.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support expansion of specialist nursing, occupational therapy and social work NESP cohorts for the 2025, 2026 and 2027 academic years. 			
	4.3.3 Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity (Extend Training) Expand on NESP training opportunities for vulnerable sub-specialties, including forensics, ID and addiction.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping of postgraduate options available. Contract in place for volumes for 2026 academic year. 		 	
	4.3.4 Grow Mental Health and Addiction Capacity (Clinical Framework) Update the clinical framework and training resources which support health professionals working with coexisting substance use and mental health problems.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the existing clinical framework and training resources. Launch revised framework and associated resources. 		 	
	4.4.1 Establish Advanced Practice Roles (Allied Health Scientific & Technical) Establish new advanced scope practice pathways to make the most of allied and nursing capabilities, starting with physiotherapy and radiation therapy.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a map of current advanced practice roles, including identifying current numbers, across radiation therapy and physiotherapy. Analyse the existing advanced practice radiation therapist role in partnership with the Cancer Control Agency Te Aho o Te Kahu. Analyse and scale the musculoskeletal (MSK) physiotherapy advanced practice role. Explore advanced practice prescribing scopes in wider allied health, scientific and technical workforces. 		   	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	4.4.2 Establish Advanced Practice Roles (Registered Nurse Prescriber) Establish new advanced practice pathways to make the most of allied and nursing capabilities.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map developed of current RN prescribers identifying numbers across areas of high priority. Fund post graduate papers for 120 primary and community healthcare RNs per year for 5 years towards RN prescribing. Coordination and enabling through PCTAP. 			
	4.4.3 Establish Advanced Practice Roles (Mental Health Peer support specialist roles) Establish mental health peer support specialist roles in eight emergency departments.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning underway and peer support specialist roles established in eight sites by the end of December 2025. 			
	4.5 Create private training capacity Reach agreement with our major private providers of public health services (e.g. private hospitals delivering public surgical lists) to allow training in private settings, with consistent terms.			
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial engagement with peak bodies for private radiology, surgical services and pathology on goal, timelines and the path to delivery of training. Engage with Colleges and professional bodies, and responsible authorities, on regulatory settings and guardrails. Initial memorandum of understanding reached with peak bodies and / or providers of surgical services on common workforce planning and training commitments, in principle. Commence development of consistent commercial terms for training, in engagement with surgical providers. Develop and launch surgical pilots in agreed locations with the agreed upon contractual terms. Agree in-principle commercial terms for training with private surgical providers. Integrate aggregate, whole-of-system planning into Health NZ workforce planning from here forward (accounting for public and private capacity). As contracts come due for renegotiation, and based on aggregate workforce demand, include training elements in line with agreed settings. Expand to other specialties and subspecialties. 		    	 

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>4.6 Make Better Use of Overseas-Trained Staff Continue to support 10 NZREX doctors per year through each of the Primary Care Pathway and NZREX Bridging Programmes.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm funding to extend the successful Waikato pilot for 10 more doctors, starting as soon as possible after approval for (HNZ) funding is confirmed. • Contract with Waikato in place. • EOI released to identify NZREX doctors interested in participating in the primary care pathway. • Additional locations/cohorts of NZREX doctors start. • Final cohort/s of NZREX doctors start. 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
	<p>4.7 Keep Our People While Training Overseas Make advanced employment offers for Health NZ Fellows going overseas for vocational training, where we know we will have national need by the time they return.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate, plan and confirm project approach. • Finalise discovery and analysis. • Confirm project plan, key deliverables and draft comms plan. • Design and develop operational model, tools, and processes. • Test and refine operational model, tools and processes. • Implement initiative and monitoring tools. • Review of programme. 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>

Priority 5

A workforce that reflects community need

Strengthen pathways to grow the diversity and inclusiveness of the workforce, particularly for communities that have not been well-served in the past, to better reflect and serve diverse communities.

The following tables outline the actions and milestones for 2025/26. Delivery of some targets will also continue into later financial years (FY). Financial years run from 1 July to 30 June the next year.

TARGET ALIGNMENT KEY

						
Faster cancer treatment	Shorter wait times for elective treatment	Shorter stays in emergency departments (ED)	Shorter wait times for first specialist assessment	Increased mental health and addiction workforce development	Increase and retain doctors (PCTAP)	Increase and retain nurse (PCTAP)

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>5.1 Adopt Common Cultural Safety Expectations Develop a suite of common expectations for culturally safe practice – for ethnic, gender, disability and LGBTQIA+ diversity – and work with tertiary education providers and regulators to adopt them across our whole health workforce</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and release key training materials and programmes to support consistent culturally safe practice, including union engagement. 		✓	
	<p>5.3 Invest Appropriately in Māori Focused Programmes Continue review and funding of effective initiatives to increase recruitment and retention of Māori workforce that directly impact on improved access to care and outcomes for high need groups.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing initiatives to enhance recruitment and retention of Māori workforce that directly impact on improved access to care and outcomes for high needs groups. Revise current investment settings as required reflecting review results. 		✓	

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	5.4 Grow mātauranga Māori Specialists Develop new mātauranga Māori roles in key workforces where we have evidence that intervention improves access and health outcomes.		✓	
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a definition and/or mātāpono for a mātauranga Māori specialist role through wānanga. Collect and collate key data to inform workforce design. Identify and support new roles under the refined definition of mātauranga specialist. 		✓ ✓ ✓	
	5.5 Invest Appropriately in Pacific Focused Programmes Continue review and funding of effective interventions that grow Pacific health workforce that directly impact on improved access to care and outcomes for high need groups		✓	
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Pacific Health Science Academies in the Northern Region. Continue the national implementation of Pacific Health Science Academies. Improve access to scholarships for Pacific learners in priority health areas. Improve access to internship programmes which expose Pacific learners to health careers early. Strengthen undergraduate and post-graduate support for Pacific learners. Improve access to cultural and mentoring support for Pacific staff through the <i>Pacific Workforce Development and Cultural Support Fund</i> and <i>Pacific Health Workers Associations</i>. Improve access to Pacific maternity community workforce development. 		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
	5.6 Open Pathways for Disabled People Work with tertiary education providers to create explicit, inclusive training pathways for disabled people into key allied professions.			✓
	Milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of current pathways to identify any potential barriers. Identify and progress as appropriate identified mitigations. 		✓	✓

Target Alignment	Initiative	Completed by (FY)		
		24/25	25/26	26/27+
	<p>5.7 Establish Rural Training Hubs Establish three rural training hubs at sites across New Zealand, employing long-term rural placements for students.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree principles for site selection. • Co-design the function and potential components of rural training hubs in association with relevant sector entities. • Undertake detailed local design with selected locations. • Establish the first iteration of training hubs. 		✓	
	<p>5.8 Support Workforce into Rural Settings Develop a Supported Entry to Rural Practice programme to acclimate professionals across the health system to rural settings when they first start work rurally.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the programme package and proposed evaluation approach. • Develop the inaugural programme to attract new graduates into rural roles. 	✓	✓	
	<p>5.9 Increase Rural Hospital Medical Specialist Training and Support Grow the number of rural hospital medical specialists we train across the system, and improve support available to trainees to bolster retention in rural settings</p> <p>Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a training ecosystem discovery report. • Develop and publish a navigation guidance document published by end July 2025. • Establish a centralised claims and reimbursement process for Health NZ-employed rural hospital medicine registrars. 	✓		✓



