



For immediate release  
16 August 2020

### **Waitematā, Auckland, and Counties Manukau DHBs delay outpatient appointments and planned care, move to virtual where possible**

From Monday 17 August, the three Auckland metropolitan district health boards (DHBs) will postpone some face-to-face planned care appointments or move to virtual appointments where it is appropriate to do so.

This includes some scheduled community appointments, outpatient clinics and elective surgeries. The measures will be in place for a week and reviewed on Friday 21 August.

Northern Region Health Coordination Centre Lead (and Counties Manukau Health CEO) Fepulea'i Margie Apa says postponing care is not a decision the DHBs take lightly.

“We have looked closely at the risks associated with this new community cluster and have activated our resurgence plans,” she says.

“Protecting our patients, whānau and staff from COVID-19 and ensuring we have sufficient capacity to care for anyone with the virus who needs hospital level care must be our priority at this time.

“We know that that having an appointment postponed can be worrying for people. Our clinical teams will be moving some appointments to virtual (via telephone or online) and more generally keeping track of people who are waiting for planned care to make sure they remain well.

“On behalf of the three DHBs I would like to thank our patients and whānau for their support as we take action to slow the spread of COVID-19 and help save lives.”

Hospitals will continue all acute, urgent and time-sensitive appointments and surgeries. Patients should continue to come to appointments unless they have been contacted by their service.

All hospital Emergency Departments in metropolitan Auckland remain open to provide care to patients.

#### **Screening of patients and visitors, change in visitor policies**

All patients and visitors entering hospitals and clinics in metropolitan Auckland will be screened for cold or flu-like symptoms and given a face mask.

We have also changed our visitor policies in response to Alert Level 3. Please visit the website of your DHB to find out more.

**ENDS**

**Media contact**

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Northern Regional Health Coordination Centre

**Notes for editors**

The Northland and metro Auckland DHBs (Counties Manukau, Waitematā and Auckland DHBs) are operating a regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC).