



Dietitians Board

Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

Unite
against
COVID-19

3 April 2020

Kia Ora,

We have now all been in Lockdown for just over a full week; an unprecedented event for our country. I do hope you are all safe and managing in your bubbles. The Board acknowledges the mahi of Registered Dietitians during this uncertain time. Your commitment to providing dietetic services and care is very much appreciated.

Below are some updates and information:

1. Ministry of Health Update – Essential Services

The Ministry has advised the Dietitians Board:

Dietitians who work within essential services (e.g. hospitals) are considered essential workers. Staff required to maintain operations are permitted to travel to and from their place of employment.

Please refer to the up to date list of [essential services](#) and work within this list and at the advice of your employer. This information is evolving daily. Whilst it does not mention the dietetic profession it lists a number of places dietitians may be working. So it would be fair to say that your place of work and your employer could help clarify whether your position fits an 'essential service'.

We will update you with additional information as it is made available. **ACC has listed Dietitians as an essential service – providing acute and emergency care.**

2. Ministry of Health Update - Remote Prescribing

For those of you who prescribe and are working remotely answers to frequently asked questions about remote prescribing have been published on the [MoH website](#). If you have any questions please email onlinehelpdesk@health.govt.nz.

3. Telehealth - guidelines

It may be you are now providing services remotely, please refer to the following documents to ensure you practise safely if engaging in Telehealth:

- The Dietitians Board – [Statement & Guidelines on Telehealth](#)
- New Zealand Telehealth Forum and resource Centre - [Risk Management For Skype Use For Clinical Video Consultations](#).
- [Allied Health Best Practice Guide for Telehealth](#)
- ACC's reference for tech used and security is existing guidelines as per [NZ Telehealth Forum and Resource Centre](#)

4. Practising during Lockdown

As Registered Dietitians, your first concern will no doubt be the care of your clients/patients and others who use dietetic, health and social care services. Working in partnership with other health professionals and people using services, the Board encourages Registered Dietitians to use professional judgement to assess risk to deliver safe care informed by any relevant guidance and the values and principles set out in their professional standards.

The Board recognises that in highly challenging circumstances, professionals may need to depart from established procedures in order to care for patients and people using health and social care services. Our regulatory standards are designed to be flexible and to provide a framework for decision-making in a wide range of situations. They support Registered Dietitians by highlighting the key principles which should be followed, including the need to work cooperatively with colleagues to keep people safe, to practise in line with the best available evidence, to recognise and work within the limits of their competence, and to have appropriate indemnity arrangements relevant to their practice.

We recognise that the some practitioners may feel anxious about how context is taken into account should concerns be raised about their decisions and actions in very challenging circumstances. Where a concern is raised about a Registered Dietitian it will always be considered on the specific facts of the case, taking into account the factors relevant to the environment in which the professional is working. The Board would also take account of any relevant information about resource, guidelines or protocols in place at the time.

If you have any concerns please talk to your employer in the first instance or contact the Board's office if required.

5. **Financial Support**

I am sure many of you are aware of the Government's [COVID19](#) website. In particular the section on [financial support](#) might be helpful for those facing unemployment and/or businesses looking for help with cash flow.

6. **2019/2020 CPD Logs and CPD Audit**

A reminder that if you haven't already, your CPD logs must be uploaded for the 2019/2020 practising year by 30 June 2020 – make sure you log it in the correct year as the 2020/2021 period is also open for logging any CPD you might undertake from 1 April 2020.

The Audit team have begun the Audit process for those who were selected for 2019/2020 CPD Audit – more than 50% of those selected for Audit have already submitted their logs – thank you so much. You will, in due course, receive an email advising if you have met requirements or are required to address any deficiencies.

7. **The 2020/2021 Practising Year**

Thanks to those of you who managed to make your Annual Declarations in plenty of time to ensure you can practise from 1 April 2020, despite the uncertainty and disruption to your lives. There are some practitioners, who we have contacted earlier this week, who are still to make their Annual Declaration and we ask you to attend to this promptly to avoid being in breach of the HPCA Act.

A late fee will be applied from 6th April onwards if you held an APC for 2019/2020.

If you have any difficulties or seek clarification on whether you should hold an APC or make a Non-Practising declaration, or, if you wish to cancel your entry on the Register contact the Board's office.

Please, be mindful of your colleagues – if you have an entry on the Register and continue to work without an APC you are both, in breach of the HPCA Act and, being disrespectful to those who have obtained their APC.

8. **Board Appointments**

I am very pleased to advise the Minister of Health has [announced the Dietitians Board Appointments](#). The Minister has reappointed **Laila Cooper** and appointed **Soana Muimuiheata**. *Soana was born and raised in Tonga. She came to New Zealand for further education and completed her dietetic training in 1995 returning to work for the Government of Tonga Ministry of Health and helped establish the National Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases Centre. Soana migrated to live in Auckland in 2002.*

Passionate about Pacific health and wellbeing, Soana has extensive practical experience in community dietary services for people with diabetes, training and education, public health and community health promotion programmes. She has worked as a Dietitian Consultant for Pacific Primary Health Organisations and ProCare Health Ltd working at GP clinics, schools, Pacific Churches, community and Marae over the past 16 years. During

this time she has also played an advisory role in nutrition & obesity on school and Community Boards.

Soana is currently working towards her Doctor of Health Science at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Her research interest is "Meaning of food and diabetes: the underlying factors that determine food practices of Tongan people with diabetes". In her spare time Soana enjoys serving her Tongan community through Church, radio programmes, whanau and community activities. She also loves walking, working out at the gym and travelling.

9. **Self-Care during Lockdown**

With support from the Ministry of Health **Melon Health** have launched '[Self-care and Support for NZers during Covid-19](#)'. Melon Health are an online community with psychosocial resources, peer support and self-care tools to help NZ'ers struggling with anxiety or loneliness during lockdown and beyond. It is intended to alleviate some of the burden on primary care by enabling providers to easily refer patients to something that is endorsed by the MOH and where patients are supported by a team of support workers (health coaches, community managers and counsellors) in a moderated online community. Live webinars will be available at 10am (and possibly at 5pm numbers pending) for people who have signed up to Melon Health. These will focus on self-care topics and facilitated mindfulness, meditation, nutrition, yoga, conflict management etc. classes - hosted by health coaches and counsellors. Please share the URL melonhealth.com/covid-19 widely with your colleagues, your practices, Marae clinics and community partners.

Do please contact Lizz or me if you have any questions or concerns – we will endeavour to help you as best we can.

Take care in your bubbles.
Kia Haumaru te noho.
Sue

Sue Domanski
Registrar
Dietitians Board
Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

Driving the creation of a workforce that is responsive to the health and wellbeing needs of New Zealanders
Our Values: Professional – Integrity – Fairness – Excellence - Kaitiaki

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