

13 January 2012

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### **Health Workforce Strategy**

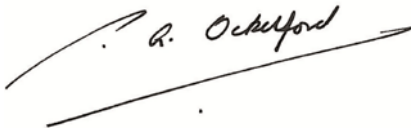
The New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) has not been formally invited to participate in the development of a National Health Workforce Strategy and have only become aware of this via a newsletter reference to this work on 21 December 2011. We understand that the Ministry of Health (MOH) is required to submit this strategy to State Services Commission (SSC) by 31 January 2012 and we note that other key stakeholders are also unaware of this work.

The NZMA is of the view that a National Health Workforce Strategy cannot be developed in this way. A strategy of such critical importance to the future of our health system and our health workforce must involve careful and comprehensive policy analysis and robust multiple phase sector wide and public consultation. The NZMA is also concerned that the inadequacy of this process may have a detrimental impact on the confidence of the sector and thereby set back true workforce strategy development. It is vital to build good relationships, trust and understanding in the sector and this can only be done through effective dialogue on matters of such high importance.

We strongly recommend that the MOH advise the SSC that the nature of the health workforce and the challenges we are dealing with currently, and into the future, are very complex and require sophisticated and inclusive policy development processes that are perhaps beyond the needs of other government agencies.

The NZMA fully supports the development of a National Health Workforce Strategy and looks forward to contributing to this via appropriate processes and within more reasonable timeframes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Ockelford", with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Dr Paul Ockelford  
NZMA Chair

cc: Dr Kevin Woods  
Director General of Health

The Hon. Tony Ryall  
Minister of Health

The Hon. Dr Jonathan Coleman  
Minister of State Services