20 April 2018

Health Committee  
Select Committee Services  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON 6160  

By email: health@parliament.govt.nz

Health (National Cervical Screening Programme) Amendment Bill

Dear Sir/Madam

The New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) wishes to convey our support for the Health (National Cervical Screening Programme) Amendment Bill. We are New Zealand’s largest medical organisation, with more than 5,000 members from all areas of medicine. Our aims are to provide leadership of the medical profession, and to promote professional unity and values, and the health of all New Zealanders.

We note that this Bill seeks to amend Part 4A of the Health Act 1956 to enable direct access to information from the National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP) register, for the purposes of conducting their work, to the following groups: NCSP register staff; Health professionals who provide services to women along the cervical screening pathway; Screening support services staff. We understand that the amendments would not alter the relevant provisions of the Privacy Act 1993, the Health Information Privacy Code 1994, health professional regulatory constraints, and employment and contract law.

We believe that these changes would represent a considerable improvement over the current situation where smear takers in primary care need to wait for clinical information to be faxed to them by authorised staff, and where access to the register for laboratory and colposcopy staff needs to be authorised by the Director-General of Health. We note that the National Cervical Screening Programme manager will retain administrative control over granting secure access to the NCSP register and access to the register will remain an auditable activity.

We look forward to the passage of this Bill and are not seeking an oral hearing before the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair