

23 April 2018

World Health Organization
Submitted online

WHO draft declaration on primary health care

Dear Sir / Madam

The New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) wishes to provide feedback on the above consultation. The NZMA is a member of the World Medical Association (WMA), and is New Zealand's largest medical organisation, with over 5,000 members from all areas of medicine. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and to promote professional unity and values, and the health of all New Zealanders.

The NZMA strongly supports the draft declaration on primary health care.¹ We agree that health systems focussed on quality primary health care provide better population and individual health, and improve health equity. We also acknowledge that primary health care is essential to achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A strong primary health care system is central to improving the health of all New Zealanders and reducing health inequalities between different groups. The launch of the Primary Health Care Strategy in 2001,² followed by the establishment of primary health organisations (PHOs), set the direction and vision for primary health care services in New Zealand. More recently, the importance of primary care is recognised in the 2016 New Zealand Health Strategy,³ which identifies 'closer to home' as one of five strategic themes.

We note that the draft declaration asks governments, in line with national priorities and context, to commit to a number of aspects, including: governance that appropriately prioritises and resources primary health care; ensuring adequate financial investment in health, and, to primary health care; training, recruitment and retention of a competent health workforce for primary health care; developing health information systems within primary care; devoting appropriate resources to research. We are already advocating on a number of these issues and intend to engage with the Government with respect to adopting and implementing the draft declaration.

¹ Available from <http://www.who.int/primary-health/conference-phc/DRAFT-Declaration--9-April-2018.pdf?ua=1>

² Available from <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/primary-health-care-strategy>

³ Available from <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/new-zealand-health-strategy-futuredirection-2016-apr16.pdf>

We note that following public consultation, the draft declaration will be reviewed by the International Advisory Group on Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage before a consultation process with Member States starting in May. We look forward to the launch of the finalised strategy this October at the Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Baddock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a decorative flourish at the end.

Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair

CC

Dr Otmar Kloiber, Secretary General, WMA
Hon David Clarke, Minister of Health
Mr Stephen McKernan, QSO, Acting Director-General of Health and Chief Executive of the
Ministry of Health