

Summary of Closed Books Stocktake 2022

Background:

The significant workforce and workload pressure and challenges around general practice access have been building this winter. General Practice New Zealand (GPNZ), through its member network, gathered information on practice enrolment status in July 2022 to help understand the demands on general practice across Aotearoa, and support national and local decision-makers with future planning.

Method:

GPNZ requested information on the general practice enrolment status from its 23 Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) members. Information was captured from 853 general practices, identifying practice enrolment status and key enablers practices are using to support access during periods where workforce resourcing is a significant challenge. We also gathered information on the ratio of enrolled patient numbers to General Practitioner FTE.

Findings:

Feedback from 23 of GPNZ PHO members showed that in early July 2022, 34% of general practices were closed to new enrolments, up from 25% when GPNZ last conducted a closed books survey in June 2021 (based on 14 PHO respondents). 59% of non-rural practices have books open, and 73% of rural practices have their books open.

Marlborough, Northland and Taranaki are among areas most significantly affected currently, with PHOs in those areas reporting that more than 50% of their practices have closed books. Marlborough has identified eight practices out of 10 with closed books, while out of Kaitia's three practices none are currently enrolling new patients.

In order to maximise patient access, practices are making widespread use of telehealth, GP and nurse phone triage and remote computer access for offsite virtual healthcare. 222 practices reported information on strategies to maximise access. Some practices reported opening extended hours and offering set times for walk-in clinics.

In urban practices the average ratio is 1185 patients to 1 FTE GP, compared with 1968 patients per full time GP in rural practices. There are many variables in relation to enrolment status and ESU: FTE ratios with practices employing a wide range of other roles, including nurse practitioners, health improvement practitioners, health coaches and clinical pharmacists.

	Total Practices	Number of practices with closed books	Percentage of practices who have closed books
Alliance Health Plus	38	7	18%
Auckland PHO	22	6	27%
Comprehensive Care PHO	46	10	22%
Cosine Primary Care Network Trust	2	0	0%
East Health Trust	19	2	11%
Eastern Bay PHA	9	2	22%
Hauraki PHO	18	0	0%
Health Hawkes Bay	22	10	45%
Marlborough PHO	10	8	80%
Mahitahi Hauora PHE	35	21	60%
Nelson Bay PHO	22	3	14%
Pegasus Health	91	37	41%
Pinnacle Midlands Health Network	85	38	45%
ProCare Health	170	37	22%
Rotorua Area Primary Health Services	15	2	13%
Te Awakairangi Health Network	17	5	29%

THINK Hauora	29	24	83%
Tū Ora	58	25	43%
Waitahi Primary Care	16	5	31%
WellSouth	85	32	38%
Westcoast PHO	13	1	8%
Western Bay of Plenty PHO	36	15	42%
Whanganui Regional Health Network	11	5	45%

The below qualitative raw information portrays the significant effort that our practice networks are putting in to enable general practice access to their communities. There was significant trends with the high usage of tele-health, phone triage and patient portal use.

COVID-19 continues to impact general practices daily with the necessity to stream respiratory patients allowing them to be seen in a safe and practical manner.

Auckland Practice	We have a robust plan in place to inform patients - and would find it relatively easy to switch to virtual.
Auckland Practice	We use multiple channels of access with Txt Email Portal telephone and video consultation. Nurse is able to consult and "co-prescribe" with same channels of access.
Hawkes Bay Practice	Telehealth, phone triage, video consults, patient portal, about to open nurse led clinic at a homeless drop-in centre. On call service after 5pm.
Hawkes Bay Practice	Phone triage, Walk in urgent care, Phone consults, Extended hours (8am to 8pm, 7 days), Multiple sites for ease of access
Tauranga Practice	Practices engage a variety of access mechanisms including: telephone and video consults, telephone triage, red (respiratory) and green (non-respiratory) streaming for face to face consults, dedicated urgent care clinics and acute care appointments held available until 10.00 a.m.

Next Steps:

We understand that the landscape is constantly changing, and the information gathered is simply a point in time.

The details are being shared with Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora and the Ministry of Health and will inform conversations with our clinical leaders and CEOs.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to our 23-member PHOs who worked with the team at GPNZ to collate this information.