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## U P D A T E | MOH POSITION STATEMENT

Following the Medical Council News published yesterday, the Ministry of Health has recently amended their position statement on pre-consultation testing of unvaccinated individuals in healthcare settings.



 **See the updated version** [\[ here \]](#)

 **Download the** [.pdf](#)

## Chair's update



### Message to the profession



As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic situation is fast evolving, requiring agile responses as well as longer term planning.

Council has provided further guidance about how our standards relate to this.

Te Kaunihera is aware that these are difficult times for frontline health practitioners.

I again want to thank you for the care and expertise you are providing to Aotearoa's communities - for the usual health needs and as part of the pandemic response.

Ngā mihi

Dr Curtis Walker  
**Chair**

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released a position statement on the management of unvaccinated individuals in healthcare settings.

## Unvaccinated patients

### Providing medical care to patients not vaccinated against COVID-19



**The Medical Council is aware that some doctors may have concerns regarding in-person consultations with patients who have not received COVID-19 vaccinations.**

The Ministry of Health position statement addresses concerns from clinicians and providers regarding in person consultations and unvaccinated patients, and the issue of requiring a negative test for COVID-19 prior to a non-urgent consultation.



**Get the full MOH position statement** [\[here\]](#)

The Medical Council has an expectation that doctors will not refuse to treat those who are unvaccinated. Under the Code of Health and Disability Service Consumers' Rights, patients have the right to freedom from discrimination, to be treated with respect, and the right to services of an appropriate standard.

As with every health care interaction, doctors should assess the risk to their own safety and implement appropriate evidence-based measures commensurate with the level of that risk.

Your employer has a responsibility to ensure that you can practise in a safe manner. If you have concerns about safety arrangements in your workplace, you should raise these with your employer so that they can be addressed. However, this is not a reason to deny medical treatment or provide a person with a lower standard of treatment or care than they

The following paragraphs from Good Medical Practice are particularly relevant in this context.

#### Treating patients who present a risk of harm

13. If a patient poses a risk to your own health and safety or that of other patients or staff, you should take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk before providing treatment or making suitable arrangements for treatment.

#### Personal beliefs and the patient

19. You must not refuse or delay treatment because you believe that a patient's actions have contributed to their condition. Nor should you unfairly discriminate against patients by allowing your personal views to affect your relationship with them.

20. Your personal beliefs, including political, religious and moral beliefs, should not affect your advice or treatment. If you feel your beliefs might affect the advice or treatment you provide, you must explain this to patients and tell them about their right to see another doctor. You must be satisfied that the patient has sufficient information to enable them to exercise that right.

21. Do not express your personal beliefs to your patients in ways that exploit their vulnerability or that are likely to cause them distress.


#### Your Health

72. Protect your patients, your colleagues and yourself by: following standard precautions

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Our standards apply across the board to all clinical settings. This means that in setting standards, the Medical Council does not distinguish between private and public medical practice.

against common serious communicable diseases where vaccines are available.

 [Good medical practice](#) sets out the principles and values that define good medical practice and provides guidance to doctors on the standards expected of them in all aspects of their professional behaviour.

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## Order amendments

**COVID-19 Public Health Response (Required Testing and Vaccinations)  
Amendment Order 2021**

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Amendment Order 2021**

There have been some key changes to the Vaccination Order around vaccine exemptions.

**Vaccinations Order amendments**

Amendments to the Vaccination Order came into force at 11.59 pm on 7 November 2021.

In brief, the Ministry of Health has established a new central process for individuals who need to apply for a vaccine exemption, related to mandatory vaccines, on medical grounds.


The application will be used for people who are required to be vaccinated under the mandatory Vaccination Order because they work in roles in health and disability, education or Corrections.

This new process will ensure that all applications for exemptions are properly considered by the right people, and only granted where there are genuine reasons for doing so.


then these will be void and an application will need to be made under the new process.


Supporting material to assist the profession, including information about the centralised exemptions process can be found on the Ministry of Health website below:

 [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Vaccinations\) Order 2021](#)

 [Mandatory vaccination resources for health professionals](#)

The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Required Testing and Vaccinations) Amendment Order 2021 is now:

 Notified in the Gazette [\[ here \]](#)

 Published online (as LI 2021/358) [\[ here \]](#)



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