



Rāmere 20 Here-turi-kōkā 2021 | Friday 20 August 2021

Reset for equity: First dose of COVID-19 vaccines for Māori and Pasifika

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) tautoko the call of Te Rōpū Whakakaupapa Urutā for Māori and Pasifika to be prioritised immediately for a first dose of the vaccine.

“There is good evidence that a first dose of the vaccine provides protection against Covid-19 infection, including the Delta variant, and is highly effective at preventing hospitalisation, ICU admission and death”, said Dr George Laking (Te Whakatōhea) a medical oncologist and RACP’s Aotearoa New Zealand President.

“We support Urutā’s call for Māori and Pasifika to receive the first dose as a priority.”

The RACP notes modelling showing that Māori and Pasifika whānau are two-and-a-half to three times more at risk of hospitalisation for Covid-19 than other ethnicities in Aotearoa NZ.

Risks of hospitalisation for Covid-19 are also greater for Māori and Pasifika at younger ages: Māori aged 44 years and Pasifika aged 40 years have the same risk of being hospitalised with complications from Covid-19 infection as a 60 year-old NZ European.

“Māori and Pasifika have the greatest risks across Covid-19 risk factors, hospitalisation and mortality rates, because these communities experience profound health inequities,” said Dr Sandra Hotu (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Ruanui) a respiratory physician and Chair of the RACP’s Māori Health Committee.

The RACP supports the approach recommended by Urutā, where kaumatua and kuia, hapū māmā and people living with long term conditions would be vaccinated with urgency, before working to roll out the first dose to Māori and Pasifika aged 12 and up.

The vaccination rate among Māori was around 15 per cent, Dr Hotu said. “The vaccine rollout has to engage with Māori and Pasifika health and community leadership – they will have the solutions to optimise vaccination coverage.”

ENDS

Media contact: Charlotte Baird
PH +64 27 405 3080

About the RACP

The RACP trains, educates, and advocates on behalf of over 18,000 physicians and 8,500 trainee physicians, across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine, and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

Follow the RACP on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheRACP>