Dear

Letter of Expectations for DHBs and Subsidiary Entities 2017/18
The Government is committed to improving the health of New Zealanders and continues to invest in key health services. In Budget 2016 Vote Health received an additional $568 million, the largest increase in seven years, demonstrating the Government’s on-going commitment to protecting and growing our public health services.

Refreshed New Zealand Health Strategy
The refreshed New Zealand Health Strategy provides DHBs and the wider sector with a clear strategic direction for delivery of health services to ensure that all New Zealanders live well, stay well and get well.

The DHB annual plans are the primary document for demonstrating DHB delivery of the Strategy, and your 2017/18 annual plan is expected to clearly demonstrate the linkages between the five themes of the Strategy and your DHB’s performance story, activities and outcomes, while also maintaining a focus on Māori health outcomes and health equity.

In particular I want to see a strong focus on providing care in the community and for services to be provided closer to home, especially for the management of long-term conditions.

Finally, I want your Board to very carefully consider how any new local initiatives fit within the context of the Strategy.

Living Within our Means
While the global economic environment continues to be challenging, DHB funding has continued to be increased year on year. DHBs need to budget and operate within allocated funding and must have clear plans to improve year-on-year financial performance. Your DHB’s financial performance is currently tracking to plan for 2016/17, and I trust that you will continue to consider where your DHB can make efficiency gains. You and your Board must monitor and hold your Chief Executive accountable against these expectations as keeping to budget allows investment into new and more health initiatives.

Improvements through national, regional and sub-regional initiatives must continue to be a key focus for all DHBs. In particular your Board must work closely with NZ Health Partnerships Ltd on ensuring the delivery of their current work programmes and services.

Working Across Government
I expect DHBs to continue supporting cross-agency work to support vulnerable families and progress outcomes for children and young people, including working with the new Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki once this has been established.
All DHBs must continue to work closely with other social sector organisations to achieve cross-sector goals in relation to the Government’s Better Public Services initiatives, and other initiatives, such as the Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project, the Childhood Obesity Plan and the Living Well with Diabetes Plan.

Locally, I expect that DHB will continue working with other agencies to reduce rheumatic fever through the delivery of its rheumatic fever prevention plan, increase immunisation coverage rates to target levels and improve outcomes for children not enrolled with a PHO, and reduce the use of seclusion in inpatient mental health services.

National Health Targets
All of the national health targets are very important for driving overall performance, and have resulted in major improvements in the health outcomes of New Zealanders. I expect DHBs to remain focussed on achieving and improving performance against all six health targets. The faster cancer treatment target remains a top priority for service delivery for DHBs and further progress is expected during 2017/18.

The first national result for the raising healthy kids health target is 49 percent. I expect results for all DHBs to improve considerably each quarter as referral processes and clinical pathways are fully implemented.

Locally, DHB has shown good performance in relation to the improved access to elective surgery health target. However, performance in relation to the other health targets needs to be improved, particularly for the increased immunisation health target. Please ensure delivery of these health targets is a priority for your DHB.

Streamlining of DHB Annual Planning
In order to ensure that the Health Strategy is informing DHB planning, DHB annual plans will be streamlined in 2017/18 so that they are focussed on my key expectations for your DHB. Your DHB should also be considering longer-term strategic planning (ten-year horizon) as a way to deliver on the vision of the Health Strategy, and I expect that in the future you will be able to demonstrate this planning.

Working regionally also continues to be important, and I expect that when you are considering your long-term strategic planning you are also considering this in a regional context.

There are a number of key planning priorities for 2017/18 that DHBs will need to clearly respond to in their annual plans. These planning priorities have been selected in order to progress the key Government expectations outlined above, and also to progress other key health initiatives, such as Bowel Screening, implementation of the Healthy Ageing Strategy and continued integration of health care in order to better prevent and manage long term conditions, and provide services and care in the best ways to meet local needs. This will require ongoing engagement with your primary and community partners, including implementation of the System Level Measures.

The full list of my planning priorities for 2017/18 is attached for your information. I have asked the Ministry to provide separate advice about how each of these should be reflected in your plan.

Concluding comments
In implementing your annual plan it is important that clinicians are engaged and involved throughout; clinical leadership is fundamental in delivering high-quality health services.

Please note that I am not requiring DHBs to refresh their statements of intent (SOIs) for tabling in 2017/18. However, please ensure you review your SOI produced in 2016/17 to confirm that there are no significant changes. The statements of performance expectations will still need to be produced and tabled.
Keep in mind that the Budget 2017 process will clarify the priorities outlined in this letter and other Government priorities, and more information will be provided when available, including information on planning priorities.

Finally, please note that the provisions of the Enduring Letter of Expectations continue to apply. The Letter can be accessed on the State Services Commission’s website.

I would like to thank you, your staff, and your Board for your continued commitment to delivering quality health care to your population. I look forward to seeing your achievements throughout 2017/18.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman
Minister of Health
2017/18 DHB Annual Planning Priorities

- Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project
- Reducing Unintended Teenage Pregnancy Better Public Service (contributory) Target
- Supporting Vulnerable Children Better Public Service Target
- Reducing Rheumatic Fever Better Public Service Target
- Increased Immunisation Better Public Service and Health Target
- Shorter Stays in Emergency Departments Health Target
- Improved Access to Elective Surgery Health Target
- Faster Cancer Treatment Health Target
- Better Help for Smokers to Quit Health Target
- Raising Healthy Kids Health Target
- Bowel Screening
- Mental Health
- Healthy Ageing
- Living Well with Diabetes
- Childhood Obesity Plan
- Child Health
- Disability Support Services
- Primary Care Integration
- Pharmacy Action Plan
- Improving Quality
- Living Within our Means
- Information Technology
- Workforce.