

Office of the Dean/Administration

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Dean

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Hon Stephen Joyce
Minister for Tertiary Education

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Dear Minister Joyce

The Universities of Auckland and Otago are committed to fulfilling the government's plan for growing the supply of medical graduates in this country. This 50% growth (400 graduates in 2008 to 600 by 2020) has been carefully planned and designed to meet New Zealand's future health workforce in all areas, but especially in rural primary healthcare. This national plan cannot be achieved without the support of all DHBs.

We are distressed to receive the accompanying letter from Waikato DHB requesting that we reduce our placements in the Waikato Hospital, even before Government approval or AMC accreditation has been granted for their proposed 3rd medical school. This letter removes any doubt about Waikato's intention to establish a boutique provincial programme and to exclude Auckland students who do not meet their requirements. They make a rather hollow offer to take some Auckland Y6 students but only if they originate from the Waikato region, are of rural origin or are committed to a PGY1 place at Waikato DHB. This is not in the spirit of a national strategy.

We began 2016 with an assurance from WDHB that they could accommodate the planned growth in the Auckland Y4, Y5 and Y6 numbers and we have further invested in Waikato DHB and in the adjoining DHBs; Bay of Plenty DHB, Lakes and Taranaki, with further expansions planned in 2017 and 2018. While we obtained that assurance, we have been repeatedly met with obfuscation - they had no spare training capacity and would struggle to accommodate the planned growth.

This letter confirms our fear that a third medical school would necessarily force a contraction in the Auckland programme because there is no additional capacity in other DHBs to accommodate the displaced students. If contraction was the outcome, then there would be no net increase in the national supply of medical graduates.

The *ad hoc* parochial approach to a third medical school is led by a Waikato triumvirate seeking primarily to increase the asset base of Waikato University. There has been minimal consultation with key stakeholders. This highlights the need for a Government led national strategy on medical workforce development. An agreed national strategy should inform the number and type of medical students required for distribution, how and where they are best trained and what the most cost effective method is to achieve the desired outcome. A provincial proposal does little to serve a national imperative and would be an unnecessary burden on the taxpayer.

We seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss these concerns and explore solutions to a national strategy for medical training.

Yours sincerely



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cc Bill English, Minister of Finance
Jonathan Coleman, Minister of Health

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