

7 July 2023



Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand
Te Aka Whai Ora, Māori Health Authority
nzhealthcharter@health.govt.nz

Re: Te Mauri o Rongo, New Zealand Health Charter

Kia ora,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the current draft Mauri o Rongo, New Zealand Health Charter.

Who we are

The New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA) is a professional medical society representing over 700 Anaesthetists and Specialist Pain Medicine Physicians (SPMP) in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our members include Specialist and Trainee Anaesthetists and SPMPs in public and private practice.

The NZSA's key roles are advocacy, facilitating and promoting education, and strengthening networks of anaesthetists nationwide.

Overview

It is pleasing to see the development of this Charter, as part of The Pae Ora Act 2022, that for the first time focuses on valuing its workforce at a ministerial level.

To understand how the values, vision and behaviours outlined in the Charter will be a living piece of our workplace it would be valuable to understand more of the systems that will be in place to uphold its intentions.

Comments

Placing the focus of the Charter on the workforce, as opposed to patients, will allow the workforce to deliver the outcomes required as part of the health reform and to use the document as a lever to achieve equitable outcomes. In addition, its application to the whole health system, not just hospitals, will augment those places that already have a good values system in keeping with the Charter and will allow all policies and processes to be guided by its values.

It is our view that to best understand the suitability of the Charter, further information on resourcing, reviewing, and reporting would be beneficial. For example: How will workplaces be appropriately resourced to ensure that they are culturally safe and support the wellbeing of all workers? Will there be checks and assurances that they will have the means to do this? What will the mechanism be to raise a concern if your workplace's behaviour is not in keeping with the Charter? And how will action be taken if it does not?

To ensure the Charter becomes more than 'just a piece of paper' once it is completed, implementation and post-implementation reviews will be needed, with benchmarks to test and review against to ensure accountability. Mandated reporting every five years will be an important component, as required by The Pae Ora Act 2022. However, during the initial years, more frequent reviews and adjustments will be required for meaningful adoption.

The charter does not mention diversity of the workforce or how we should be supporting minority groups in our organisations. As outlined in the newly released Health Workforce Plan 2023-2024, diversity in the workforce is part of ensuring its safety and this seems an opportunity to include this shift in regulation within the Charter as well.

Within the document itself, it would be beneficial to provide a short explanation of each of the pillars. This will assist those less familiar with these terms and for those who know the literal translation of the word it may be beneficial to understand how it relates to the content below each pillar. For example, as taken from the webinars:

- Wairuatanga – working with heart
- Rangatiratanga – leaders at all levels
- Whānaungatanga – weave our people to a common purpose
- Te Korowai Arataki/Ahura – cloak – safety and comfort

Please also note the small grammatical error with a single bracket following 'Pou' in the table.

The intention of the Charter is admirable and to achieve a nationwide culture change it will need to be approached from the top down for the 'bureaucracy' of health to live by Mauri o Rongo.

We appreciate the significant amount of work that has gone into engagement during the drafting of the Charter and the importance of timeliness to see its completion. However, the three-week timeframe for feedback whilst concurrently seeking feedback on major restructures of health sector services seems a bit short and may limit engagement from the busy workforce it is designed for.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the current draft Mauri o Rongo, New Zealand Health Charter. Providing a document that will guide our whole health system with a focus on the wellbeing of its workers is a positive step forward in meeting the outcomes of the health reforms. We hope consideration will be carefully given and shared on the systems that will be required to enable the values, vision and behaviours it outlines to be a living part of the culture of our health system.

Ngā mihi,



Dr Morgan Edwards
President, New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists