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Memorandum: National Bowel Screening Programme Update 30 April 2018

To: Hon Dr David Clark, Minister of Health

Purpose

This briefing provides information for a meeting with Jill Lane, Director Service Commissioning and Dr Jane O'Hallahan, Clinical Director, National Screening Unit, Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on Monday 30 April 2018, from 8.45am to 9.00am. The meeting will provide an update on the implementation of the National Bowel Screening Programme (NBSP).

Background

1. Since your last meeting with officials on 19 March 2018, the Ministry has provided you with the following briefings about the NBSP:

Reference	Title	Summary statement
20180670	Bowel Screening Pilot ongoing invitation issues	This memo provided information on two new issues that had been identified in relation to the identification and invitation of eligible people within the Bowel Screening Pilot.

2. The Ministry has also provided you with twelve Official Information Requests since 19 March 2018 and are managing a further four.

Communications and Media

3. Interest in the NBSP remains high with a number of media requests received in March and April. The Ministry is following normal practice with these media enquiries.
4. The Ministry released a media statement during the week of 16 April about how 15,000 more people than first thought did not receive invitations for free bowel screening during the bowel screening pilot programme.
5. The Ministry's spokesperson on this issue Dr Jane O'Hallahan was interviewed for:
 - a. Radio New Zealand with both Karen Brown and Nita Blake-Persen
 - b. News Hub
 - c. ZB
6. In addition on the 9th of April the Ministry provided a response to Nicholas Jones, journalist with the New Zealand Herald on the "address override issue" following the release of information under the OIA.

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- Information was provided to Bowel Cancer New Zealand to clarify and correct information included in a media statement issued by the Association on the “address override” issue.

Activity

Address Override Issue

- In February 2018 the Ministry advised you about an address override procedure used in the pilot which had unintended adverse consequences for participants (HR20180178 refers).
- The 333 participants with an updated NHI address and overdue for screening were deemed adversely impacted. These participants have since received a letter of apology and an invitation for screening.

Bowel Screening Pilot ongoing invitation issues

- On 4 April your office was informed of two new issues that had been identified in relation to the identification and invitation of eligible people within the Bowel Screening Pilot (HR 20180670 refers).
- The first new issue referred to eligible participants being included on a “do not load list” and as a result were not included in the invitation cohort for the Pilot. The impact of this has been quantified as follows:
 - 9,540 people from this list should have been invited for screening
 - 31 people (of the 9,540) have a diagnosis of bowel cancer on the New Zealand Cancer Registry.
- The Ministry has finalised the invitation strategy for this cohort of people, which will see them receiving an invitation to screening between early May and the end of September 2018, commencing with people in the 60-74 year age group, followed by those in the 50-59 year age group. It is necessary to carefully plan the invitation of this cohort of people to ensure sufficient colonoscopy capacity is available at Waitemata DHB to support a temporary increase in volumes.
- All people in this group will receive a letter of apology in early May. The letter also reiterates that screening is intended for people with no symptoms of bowel cancer and anyone with concerns about their bowel health should see their General Practitioner.
- A change is required to the information system to enable the invitation of people for the full Pilot age range (50-74).
- The second new issue referred to people with multiple NHIs and an anomaly in a data script in the Ministry’s Data Warehouse which resulted in a small number of people not being invited to the pilot. Early analysis shows that 284 people are affected by this issue and of this group there is likely two people have developed bowel cancer.
- The 284 people are in the process of being invited and an apology letter is being provided.
- A clinical review has commenced of the people in both groups diagnosed with bowel cancer to determine whether these invitation issues may have impacted on their outcome.

Southern DHB Commencing Bowel Screening

- Following successful completion of the readiness assessments at Dunedin and Invercargill hospital, Southern DHB commenced bowel screening on 24 April 2018. The DHB organised a well-attended and successful launch day that involved their community and stakeholders.

Counties Manukau DHB Commencing Bowel Screening

- The Ministry continues to engage with Counties Manukau DHB as it prepares to commence bowel screening in June 2018.
- Planning for assessment of their readiness to go live is well underway. Part of this is ensuring the quality standards are able to be met and we are working together to ensure any issues are resolved.

21. Building issues have had an indirect impact on the Bowel Screening Programme. This does not affect the planned go-live in June 2018. Bowel screening colonoscopies will be provided at the Manukau Super Centre. To enable this some symptomatic endoscopy clinics were to be moved to the Gilbraith Building at Middlemore. With the Galbraith Building needing remedial work some symptomatic endoscopies will be outsourced by the DHB in order to accommodate screening colonoscopies.
22. As at January 2018 wait times for urgent and surveillance colonoscopies were met. Non-urgent wait times were 6% below the 70% indicator. The DHB has a plan in place to meet the colonoscopy wait time target.

Information Technology (IT) Procurement

23. The National Screening Solution (NSS) procurement is in its final stages, with contract negotiations for the detailed design phase on track to commence in late April 2018.
24. The detailed design phase will provide a fixed price from the vendor, which will inform the June 2018 business case to joint Ministers of Health and Finance for the NSS build.
25. The NSS is on track to be implemented from March 2019, with MidCentral and Whanganui DHB the first two DHBs to roll out using the NSS by June 2019.

Publication of equity paper

26. Equity is a key focus for the National Bowel Screening Programme (NBSP) and evidence supports that bowel screening has positive health gains for both Māori and non-Māori. Modelling shows that non-Māori health gains will be higher than Māori health gains in the NBSP.
27. The Bowel Screening Advisory Group (BSAG) and the National Screening Unit (NSU) have investigated lowering the Māori age range for bowel screening as a way of achieving equitable health gains following discussions with the sector.
28. The NSU has prepared a paper that examines the consideration of the potential equity impacts for Māori of the age range for screening. The paper concludes that given the balance of available evidence lowering the age-range for Māori is currently not recommended. The key reasons are that Māori have lower incidence of bowel cancer and do not benefit as much from the National Bowel Screening Programme as non-Māori.
29. Based on these findings the BSAG supports this recommendation. The NBSP will continue to focus on achieving equitable access to and through the bowel screening pathway.
30. The NSU will closely monitor programme data and consider piloting a lower age range for Māori in three to four years, if this is supported by clinical evidence. The NSU will review the programme parameters, including age range, once the programme has been fully implemented in 2020/21.
31. The NSU intends to publish the paper on its website during May 2018.

END.