

19 December 2022

Te Aka Whai Ora **Te Whatu Ora**
Māori Health Authority Health New Zealand

Tēnā koutou katoa,

In the past month, the number of COVID-19 cases has increased, and more than 23,700 courses of COVID-19 antivirals have been dispensed. We would like to thank each of you for your continued work to ensure people have access to these medicines in the community.

With the festive season almost here, along with the associated public holidays and interruptions to usual services, it is more important than ever for providers to collaborate to ensure our priority populations (Māori, Pacific peoples and people living with disabilities) have access to COVID-19 antivirals, especially given people need to start taking these medicines within 5 days of developing symptoms. When looking at how we've performed so far, we have comparatively good uptake of antivirals against our peers overseas and this has stayed true across our priority populations, including good uptake for Māori and Pacific peoples in the 50 to 64 years age-group. We want to thank you for your efforts so far.

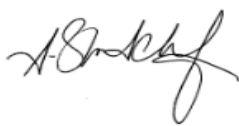
Manatū Hauora - Ministry of Health, Te Aka Whai Ora - Māori Health Authority and Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand greatly value the vital role of GPs and community pharmacists in the supply of COVID-19 antivirals, and we continue to support the reclassification of these medicines to enable pharmacist-initiated supply.

Many pharmacies began offering COVID-19 antivirals as soon as they were reclassified as Pharmacist-Only Medicines, and hundreds more have come on board since. We appreciate every participating pharmacy and welcome more to join the effort. Our COVID-19 Care in the Community team can provide guidance and assistance if you're looking to participate in pharmacist-initiated supply or provide antivirals on prescription. Every pharmacy that joins represents an important access point that could make a difference to someone at risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Please email the team at COVIDCareintheCommunity@health.govt.nz if you have questions or would like support.

We would also like to thank all the GPs and pharmacists who have supported each other in this mahi. Collaborative relationships between pharmacists and general practitioners are key to the safe and successful rollout of COVID-19 antiviral medicines. Mutual support and collaboration will continue to be vital through the summer, as all health professionals around the motu work to balance demand for their services with taking a much-needed break.

Once again, a heartfelt thanks and acknowledgment of your extraordinary mahi and support. We wish each of you, and your whānau, a happy and healthy holiday season.

Ngā mihi maioha,



Andi Shirtcliffe

Chief Clinical Advisor
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Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand



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