



24<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Andrew Connelly  
Chief Medical Officer  
Ministry of Health

and all DHB CMO's

Dear Andrew

**Statement on COVID vaccination from the NZ Region of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand, the NZ Cardiac Clinical Network, the National Cardiothoracic Surgery Clinical Network and the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand.**

We recommend all patients with cardiovascular disease are vaccinated with Comirnaty (Pfizer) or another approved vaccine as early as possible.

For unvaccinated patients' vaccination is encouraged prior to hospital discharge or during the next 2 weeks either in primary care, at a vaccination centre, or at the time of an outpatient visit.

Vaccination status should be determined for all patients and relevant advice included in medical correspondence. We recommend that DHB's and the Ministry of Health take steps to enable this recommendation.

The reasons for this recommendation are:

1. Unvaccinated patients with medical conditions and a recent hospitalisation have a much higher risk of hospitalisation, ICU admission and death after COVID infection compared to the general population.
2. The "public" vaccination program may not reach many people (up to one third based on international experience). An unknown number of our patients have not yet been vaccinated.
3. There is a time delay between first vaccination and full immune protection (~2 months). This delay is decreased by immediate vaccination.
4. Offering vaccination is an expected part of medical care, and an effective way to address inequity, and the '3Cs' which explain most vaccine hesitancy - Complacency, inConvenience, and lack of Confidence.
5. Implementing this soon will have a greater impact on the future burden of COVID (cost, sickness and death) for the health system from high-risk patients who remain unvaccinated.



6. It is acknowledged vaccination of some inpatients may need to be delayed because of their acute medical problem. However available evidence suggests vaccination is reasonable for most patients before discharge. The CDC and American College of Cardiology guidelines recommend early vaccination for all patients and identify patients with a recent hospital admission to be at particularly high risk.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Devlin".

Gerry Devlin MD FCSANZ FESC  
Clinical Leader Cardiac Network.  
Medical Director Heart Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Williams".

Michael Williams, MD, FACC, FCSANZ  
Chair of the NZ Region Cardiac Society of  
Australia and New Zealand

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Séan D. Galvin".

Séan D. Galvin, MB ChB, FCSANZ, FACS, FRACS  
Clinical Leader, National Cardiothoracic  
Surgery Clinical Network