



New Zealand Orthopaedic Association

Level 12, Ranchhod Tower | 39 The Terrace, Wellington 6011

PO Box 5545, Wellington 6140

Phone: 04 913 9891 | **Fax:** 04 913 9890

www.nzoa.org.nz

14 October 2021

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6011

Via David Hawkins, Senior Private Secretary: Dave.Hawkins@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Minister

In-person Physiotherapy Consultations Under Alert Level 3

The New Zealand Orthopaedic Association (NZOA) is writing in support of the concerns raised by Physiotherapy New Zealand and the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand regarding restricting allied health professionals at Alert Level 3 to face-to-face appointments for urgent only care. This severely limits the ability of physiotherapists to have in-person consultations with patients.

Physiotherapy is a key requirement to ensure the successful outcome of many Orthopaedic surgical procedures. Orthopaedic surgeons frequently recommend pre-habilitation and re-habilitation for certain conditions and surgeries. Pre-habilitation improves the functional capability of a patient prior to surgery. Re-habilitation post-surgery reestablishes joint motion, improves muscle strength and joint function. Both pre-habilitation and re-habilitation are essential components to ensure successful and optimal health outcomes for many patients and decreases the likelihood of reinjury.

Orthopaedic surgery resumed in Level 3. Surgeons carefully prioritise and screen their patients and are operating at approximately 70% of their usual lists to ensure adequate infection and prevention control. Without the support of physiotherapists in the pre-habilitation and re-habilitation area, we are concerned many of our patients will have sub-optimal outcomes.

We request the Minister directs the Ministry of Health to revise the Alert Level 3 guidelines to allow allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists to provide appropriate services for our patients as indicated. We have trust and confidence that physiotherapists can manage and undertake appropriate infection prevention control measures.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this situation.

Yours sincerely



Peter Devane
President



Andrea Pettett
Chief Executive

Cc: Ashley Bloomfield, Director-General of Health, Ministry of Health
Andrew Connelly, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health
Sandra Kirby, Chief Executive, Physiotherapy New Zealand
Jeanette Woltman-Black, Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand
John McKie, First President Elect, NZOA
Haemish Crawford, Second President Elect, NZOA
Peter Robertson, Immediate Past President, NZOA