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### **GenPro concerned that the approach to childhood immunisations is missing the point**

GenPro is concerned that the move by the Ministry of Health to fund childhood immunisations by Pharmacy is a missed opportunity to strengthen the existing service already provided by General Practice.

Dr Angus Chambers, Chair of GenPro says “General Practice offers a comprehensive service that includes effective delivery of childhood immunisations, including precall and recall to support patients to receive their immunisations on schedule. It also offers the opportunity to check in on the parents to see how they are doing. This is one benefit of continuity of care and knowing your patients. Coming to your General Practice for immunisations also provides the practice team with the opportunity to check for any developmental or health issues that the child may be experiencing”.

GenPro understands that lack of investment in immunisation has led to the problematic levels of childhood immunisation and believes that additional funding for immunisation and training of more staff should be offered to General Practice before funding a new service that is limited to vaccine delivery.

Additional funding, especially into the nursing workforce, seems a logical option given the issue of pay disparity for primary care nurses and the associated loss of workforce capacity.

“I cannot understand why additional funding wouldn’t be used supporting and expanding the current General Practice based service. Te Whatu Ora pays the same amount to deliver 8 immunisations to a vulnerable 6-week-old child as it does to deliver a single covid vaccine to an adult. This demonstrates that Te Whatu Ora scarcely values this vital health event. Providing additional capacity in General Practice to deliver immunisations will help lift the rates and build on the infrastructure and systems that are already in place. And further investment in capacity in General Practice will reduce the barriers to access and wait times” said Dr Chambers.

The issue of patients being unenrolled is a system wide challenge, and the focus for better health outcomes should be on supporting all New Zealanders to enroll in General Practice.

GenPro is keen to work with the Ministry to support the development of an improved vaccination service and better patient engagement with General Practice, starting with attending general practice for early childhood immunisation services.

Dr Chambers went on to say “There is strong international evidence of the benefits of enrollment with General Practice and a well-coordinated immunisations service is part of that. This initiative risks the fragmentation of care”.

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**Further information can be obtained from:**

Mark Liddle, Chief Executive

[www.genpro.org.nz](http://www.genpro.org.nz)