

Seven Steps to Restore General Practice

A strong, accessible and financially sustainable general practice sector is the foundation of a high-performing health system.

When general practice is properly supported, people live longer, hospitals face less pressure, and public funding delivers better value.

GenPro believes every New Zealander should have equitable access to high-quality general practice. Funding should reflect both the cost of delivering care, and the health needs of the communities that practices serve.

This policy agenda sets out seven practical, evidence-based commitments for political parties ahead of the November 2026 General Election.

The Top Three Priorities

1. Invest in Frontline General Practice

Restore the financial sustainability of general practice through a long-term funding commitment.

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Commit to a cumulative 30 percent increase in general practice funding over three years.
- Introduce an independent cost-adjustment mechanism that reflects the true cost of delivering care and prevents the erosion of practice funding.
- Publish a five-year funding pathway to provide certainty for practices and support long-term investment.
- Recognise the higher cost of delivering care through targeted funding for:
 - patients with complex health needs; and
 - rural and remote practices.

The result: Better access to care, shorter waiting times, reduced pressure on emergency departments, and a more financially sustainable primary care sector.

2. Support Long-Term GP–Patient Relationships

Strengthen the trusted relationship between patients and their general practice team.

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Recognise continuity of care as a core quality measure because it is proven to enhance patient outcomes and reduce avoidable hospital admissions.
- Ensure every enrolled patient has a named General Practitioner or Nurse Practitioner.
- Maintain face-to-face consultations as the foundation of primary care, with telehealth complementing—not replacing—in-person services.

The result: Patients receive more personalised, coordinated care from clinicians who know their medical history, and who they trust. This will lead to better health outcomes, people remaining well and living longer, while lowering costs across the health system.

3. Strengthen Rural and After-Hours Care

Ensure every New Zealander has access to high-quality primary healthcare, regardless of where they live.

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Increase rural funding to reflect the true cost of providing primary care and sustainable after-hours services.
- Expand support for rural workforce recruitment and retention through locum funding, accommodation assistance and travel support.
- Invest in the infrastructure and digital connectivity needed to deliver high-quality rural healthcare.

The result: More doctors and nurses wanting to work in rural communities, results in better access to care, improved after-hours services, and more equitable health outcomes across New Zealand.

Four Additional Priorities

4. Reduce Bureaucracy and Improve Funding Transparency

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Make government funding flows to frontline health services fully transparent.
- Reduce unnecessary administrative layers and direct more funding to patient care through general practice wherever appropriate.
- Reduce compliance and reporting obligations that consume GP and practice staff time without improving patient outcomes.

The result: More health funding reaches frontline services, improving patient care and delivering better value for taxpayers.

5. Support Independent, community-owned General Practice

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Protect and strengthen the owner-operated general practice model.
- Ensure government policy supports a diverse, community-based primary care sector rather than encouraging unnecessary corporate consolidation.

The result: Communities retain access to locally owned practices focused on patient need and continuity of care, with healthcare decisions remaining close to the people they serve.

6. Give General Practice a Stronger Voice

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Require early, meaningful consultation with GenPro on significant changes to funding, service design and primary healthcare policy.
- Ensure policy decisions are evidence-based and reflect both clinical outcomes and the financial sustainability of general practice.

The result: Policies are better informed by frontline experience, leading to more practical improvements and better outcomes for patients.

7. Build a Sustainable General Practice Workforce

GenPro calls on political parties to:

- Fund general practice so it can offer pay and employment conditions that are competitive with those in hospitals.
- Provide practical support for recruiting and retaining internationally qualified clinicians.
- Improve access to low-interest finance or capital assistance to help the next generation of GPs buy into independent practices.

The result: A stronger workforce, fewer practice closures, improved recruitment and retention, and better access to care for patients.

Conclusion

General practice is the front door to New Zealand's health system. Every dollar invested in primary care helps keep people healthier, reduces avoidable hospital demand, and delivers better value for taxpayers. These seven commitments provide a practical roadmap for building a stronger, more accessible and financially sustainable health system.

About GenPro

GenPro is the **General Practice Owners Association of Aotearoa New Zealand**. We represent the owners of independent general practices and urgent care centres and advocate for policies that strengthen frontline primary healthcare, improve patient access, and ensure the long-term sustainability of community-based general practice.