

# INFORMATION FOR CORRECTIONS STAFF

## ***For Case Managers Probation Staff and PARS***

### **Te Ara Whakapuāwai - Helping people connect with community health services**

Te Ara Whakapuāwai is a programme funded by the Canterbury DHB to help people released into Canterbury community to connect with local GP services, access appropriate medicine and connect with services to support their mental and physical health by reducing the barriers to accessing health care for people on release from prison. It recognises that the first few months of reintegration are often the most challenging for people who are reestablishing themselves in the community.

### **Consultations for People on Release from Prison and Australian Deportees**

Through the Te Ara Whakapuāwai programme, Canterbury General Practices (GPs) are offering additional health support, including 3 free general practice consults, within three months of release from prison or return to New Zealand, to:

- people who have been recently released from a prison sentence of more than 2 years or
- are returning to New Zealand from Australia under a section 501 order.

To access this service, eligible people need to phone a local GP and ask for an appointment. They will need to tell the receptionist they are part of the Te Ara Whakapuāwai programme (or that they are part of the prison release health service). If they have any trouble connecting with health services they can phone the number below. Brochures are available in Service Centres for you to give people.

### **Te Ara Whakapuāwai aims to improve individual and community health by:**

- Improving equity of access by removing cost as a barrier.
- Increasing enrolment for this difficult to engage population into Primary Care.
- Improving ongoing engagement.

### **More information:**

✉ [PCWService@pegasus.org.nz](mailto:PCWService@pegasus.org.nz) ☎ (03) 379 1739 ☎ (022) 010 3296



## Background:

Offenders are a cohort of people who experience poorer health status than the average population. Many factors contribute to the barriers they describe to accessing General Practice on release. They are predominately Māori and face inequity in both health access and outcomes. Over half are diagnosed with a chronic disease.

## Eligibility criteria:

The scheme has specific options and eligibility criteria to ensure that outcomes extend beyond the simple provision of eliminating initial costs. These include:

- **The provision is only available for a sentenced offender released from prison (or deported from Australia).** It is not for those who have been in prison short-term on remand or on home detention. This therefore concentrates on those whose needs are well known, who are less likely to be connected/engaged and therefore most likely to receive the most significant benefit in terms of health outcomes.
- **The provision is available for a 3 month period following release and for a maximum of 3 consultations.** We are aware 60% of people released usually require access to General Practice within 3 months of their release date. This also promotes early connection/intervention- offenders on release have limited money and resources and often need to establish the basic of daily living e.g. accommodation, food, clothing and therefore the cost of a consultation may initially be a barrier to engaging with General Practice. This period normally lasts 2-3 months and having provision for that time will support engagement but does not need to be longer as other arrangements can be made either with MSD or between the individual and the General Practice.
- **The requirement that individuals are enrolled (or enrol on initial attendance) with the practice that they have attended.** Encourages people to take better responsibility for their own health and allows them to stay well in their community
- **Free visits within specific constraints are at the discretion of the General Practice,** i.e. First consultations with a General Practitioner can be at twice the timeframe of a standard 15 minute consultation to enable coverage of the many facets of the persons health including mental health and AOD issues, history of violence and chronic health conditions.

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