



Strategic Directions for Pathology and Laboratory Services In Taranaki

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Document Control

This document has been prepared by
Becky Jenkins, General Manager Planning, Funding & Population Health
Taranaki District Health Board
David Street / Private Bag 2016
NEW PLYMOUTH 4310

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Laboratory testing plays a critical role in clinical decision making providing clinicians with information that supports and expedites diagnosis and treatment. Laboratory tests also underpin disease screening for risk factors, determination of disease severity, recovery likelihood, therapeutic selection, monitoring and investigation of adverse outcomes. At the population health level, clinical laboratories are critical in the identification of hospital acquired infections, identifying antimicrobial resistance patterns, and in the control of infectious disease outbreaks and exposures to toxic substances. Pathology and Laboratory services are involved at multiple stages of the patient pathway and cross community, primary, secondary and tertiary service boundaries. It is generally accepted that approximately 70% of diagnoses rely on output from Pathology or Laboratory services.”
(Ministry of Health, 2014)

Pathology and Laboratory Services (PLS) are a core part of any health system. Due to ongoing technological innovation, advances in evidence-based medicine and changing demographic profiles, diagnostic laboratory tests are making an increasingly important contribution to the quality and cost-effective delivery of clinical health care. Improved health care delivery has resulted in population groups that are more dependent on diagnostic testing to support increasingly sophisticated disease treatment and prevention programmes. As such, increases in laboratory test requests have been reported in New Zealand and worldwide for a number of years.

There has been considerable change in the delivery of Laboratory Services over the past decade, with a reduction in the number of community providers. There has also been a great deal of tendering of supply of community contracts, generally with a view to reduce costs and duplicated infrastructure. Furthermore, there have been some moves to integrate Hospital and Community Laboratories, set against an increasingly complex backdrop of changing service configuration, differing models of care and increasing use of diagnostics in finding out more about health status of patients.

Taranaki District Health Board (DHB) funds and provides Pathology and Laboratory Services for the Taranaki population and these strategic directions will be used to inform the future funding, planning and delivery of Pathology and Laboratory Services in Taranaki.

“A strategy is a guide for achieving the sort of future that you want. It can help people, organisations or a whole system work together more effectively on the most important things. Without a strategy, small problems today can become big problems over time” (New Zealand Health Strategy)

2. PURPOSE

This paper aims to:

- Describe the current Laboratory Service provision for the Taranaki community
- Identify the strategic context and key drivers of demand
- State strategic direction and principles to guide the commissioning of future Laboratory Services for the Taranaki region
- Inform stakeholders of the proposed strategic direction

3. PROCESS

This paper is the responsibility of Taranaki DHB and represents a synthesis of a range of work over the past few years, with input from Taranaki MedLab Ltd and Taranaki DHB Hospital and Specialist Services (LabCare).

In December 2014, the Ministry of Health published *A Strategic Framework for the Pathology and Laboratory Sector* to provide direction, enabling and guiding the New Zealand PLS to appropriately respond to the challenges in the health system. This national Framework has informed these strategic directions.

PLS strategies from other DHBs have also been drawn on to develop these strategic directions.

A range of key stakeholders, including referrers in primary and secondary care and laboratory staff and unions were provided with an opportunity to consider the strategic directions and feedback has been incorporated into the final version.

4. TARANAKI CONTEXT

The following Pathology and Laboratory Services are funded by Taranaki DHB:

- Haematology
- Biochemistry
- Anatomical Pathology
- Microbiology
- Blood Bank Services
- Antenatal Blood Bank Services
- Virology and Serology
- Patient Services
- Point of Care Testing
- Autopsies
- Bone Marrow Collection
- Antenatal HIV testing
- Send Away Testing to other Laboratory Services

4.1 COMMUNITY LABORATORY SERVICES

Community Laboratory Services are medical laboratory or clinical laboratory tests and associated services to obtain information about the health of a patient. Community tests are requested by General Practitioners and Community Practitioners including Lead Maternity Carers (LMC), Nurse Practitioners, Dentists and Specialists in private practice.

Community Laboratory Services are provided by LabCare and Taranaki MedLab Ltd. The bulk of these services are provided by Taranaki MedLab Ltd.

Under contract to Taranaki DHB, Taranaki MedLab provides services to all eligible patients and collection clinics are provided in New Plymouth, Stratford and Hawera. The current providers deliver home-based specimen collection services for those patients not reasonably able to access specimen collection centres. Taranaki MedLab also supply referring practitioners with equipment

and consumables related to the collection of samples free of charge, to support collection for primary care centres, rest homes and patient homes.

4.2 HOSPITAL LABORATORY SERVICES

LabCare services are medical laboratory or clinical laboratory tests and associated services requested by hospital clinicians and consultants. LabCare provides Hospital Laboratory Services for Base Hospital and Hawera Hospital. LabCare contracts a range of services to Taranaki MedLab including pathology, histology and cytology services.

LabCare does also carry out some community referred testing and manages the more complex and specialist “send away” testing which has been carried out for a number of years utilising Canterbury DHB services.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section introduces the key themes from the 2016 NZ Health Strategy, which has been drawn on to inform the strategic context for Pathology and Laboratory services. These key themes include:

- Patient Centred Care
- Closer to Home
- Value and Performance
- Health Service Integration
- Smart System

More detail is provided to the themes below, establishing the strategic context for the objectives and expected outcomes outlined in Section 6. The strategic intent of the DHB is to implement a “whole of system” approach by moving to a single laboratory provider for hospital and community services – consolidating services with a single, large processing lab complemented by acute campuses as required..

5.1 PATIENT CENTRED CARE – A PEOPLE POWERED APPROACH

Drawing on the Health Strategy, a ‘Patient Centred’ approach involves empowering people to be ‘health smart’. ‘Health smart’ individuals can retrieve and understand the information they need to manage their care. This relies on effective communication by healthcare service providers and supporting patients with a clear navigation of the system, including through the use of accessible technology such as mobile phones and the internet. Pathology and Laboratory Services are key to a ‘Patient Centred’ approach that enables New Zealanders to be healthier and more independent.

5.2 CLOSER TO HOME – COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTHCARE

This theme focuses on providing care closer to where people live, learn, work and play. This is especially important in:

- Managing long-term conditions, integrating health services and making better connections with wider public services
- Promoting wellness and preventing long-term conditions through both population-based and targeted initiatives
- Investing in health and wellbeing early in life and focusing on children, young people, and families/whanau.

5.3 VALUE AND PERFORMANCE

The Health Strategy's emphasis on value and performance involves the overall improvement of people's experience of care, health status and best-value use of resources. Other key drivers include:

- Reducing barriers to services for Maori and high needs groups
- Striving for equitable health outcomes for Maori and other New Zealand population groups that suffer from unequal health outcomes
- Measuring performance well and using information transparently, in order to drive learning and decision-making that will lead to better performance
- Building a culture of performance and quality improvement that values the different contributions the public and health workforce can make to improving services and systems
- Having an integrated operating model that makes responsibilities clear across the system
- Enhancing clinical quality by delivering a seamless service to the patient and clinicians in an open and transparent manner taking account of international best practice

5.4 INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICE – ONE TEAM

This integrated approach emphasises the operation of all branches of the health sector as a co-operative team in a high-trust system. Furthermore, healthcare providers and services are encouraged to work together with the patient and their family/whanau, draw on the health and disability workforce in the most effective and most flexible way, and develop leadership, talent and workforce skills throughout the system.

5.5 SMART SYSTEM

The 'Smart System' approach involves discovering, developing and sharing effective innovations across the healthcare system and is closely linked to health service integration. Other key factors include:

- Taking advantage of opportunities offered by new and emerging technologies
- Having data and smart information systems that improve evidence-based decisions, management reporting and clinical audit
- Having reliable, accurate information that is available at the point of care
- Providing individual online health records that people are able to access and contribute
- Using standardised technology that allows changes to be made easily and efficiently

6. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

This section outlines the proposed service principles Taranaki DHB recommends in order to provide sustainable Pathology and Laboratory Services for the Taranaki population. Guided by the MoH Health Strategy, these strategic directions will be used to inform the future funding, planning and delivery of Pathology and Laboratory Services in Taranaki. Objectives and expected outcomes are structured by each of the national Health Strategy themes, although some goals could be placed in more than one category.

6.1 PATIENT CENTRED CARE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equitable access to local PLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Place collection centres in convenient locations ○ Provide Point of Care Testing and quality oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients experience a seamless laboratory service and equitable health outcomes: “Right care, right place, and right result at the right time” • The service is accessible and appropriate for all peoples of Taranaki • Continuity of service to patients with minimal disruptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide digital solutions for patient access to information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider linking laboratory results to the integrated patient care plan to provide patient access to results 	

6.2 CLOSER TO HOME

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
<p>Implement a “whole of system” approach that manages overall hospital and community testing together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely access to diagnostic results for primary and community health sectors • Prevention and early intervention of long-term conditions through targeted initiatives • Single laboratory service in place • Transaction costs are minimised and integration constraints including capital constraints are removed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a “whole of system” approach that manages overall hospital and community testing together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consolidate services with a single, large processing lab complemented by acute campuses as required ○ Ensure collection centre locations meet the needs of the population 	

6.3 VALUE AND PERFORMANCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure PLS provides best value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical ordering and diagnostic practice consistent with best practice guidelines • Provision of a timely and accurate service • Increased efficiency of PLS and decreased duplication including management of send-away testing • High quality service and clinical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to referrers and others to drive learning, decision-making and improved performance 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement full participation in an “alliance” structure which has the primary aim of managing laboratory spending within our means, and with making progress with system level efficiencies, such as e-referral, demand 	

<p>side management, analysis of referral trends, integration of data with disease management particularly chronic disease management and, also, clinical governance/monitoring of infection control</p>	<p>excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLS and system-wide KPIs to measure performance • Demand management strategies in place • Effective governance structure in place ensuring quality services are delivered, services are accessible to those in need and laboratory spending is within our means
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively manage risks associated with PLS to ensure sustainability of the system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design disaster management plans in addressing natural disasters and epidemics 	

6.4 INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an integrated “whole of system” approach to PLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a streamlined, single service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible systems and workforce • Timely advice to clinicians, referrers and others • Sustainability through connected clinical and financial resources, and risk management • Funding model that ensures shared risks and benefits, and on-going self-determination of PLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate and align infrastructure and resources to minimise capital and transaction costs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate mix of trained and qualified staff to deliver patient centred services 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a sustainable funding and contracting model 	

6.5 SMART SYSTEM

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the introduction of new technology and testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standardise where possible ○ Adapt, including in workforce structure, to the increase of automation, robotics and other changes in technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved accuracy and efficiency of diagnosis, reporting and clinical audit with new technologies • Reduced risk through single IT system and file sharing • Have reliable, accurate information at the point of care • Quality and stable workforce • Consult Liaison and MDT meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide referrers with continued access to pathological advice 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update IT system with a new, unified model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Single repository of information remains available ○ Link repository to shared patient record ○ Introduce E-referral 	

7. REVIEW

Strategic Directions for Pathology and Laboratory Services in Taranaki (November 2016) is available on the DHB website (www.tdhb.org.nz) and may be subject to review as further decisions are made regarding the commissioning of future Laboratory Services for the Taranaki region.