

16th July 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Subject: The Ongoing Impact of Covid-19 on Clinicians and Communities — A Call for Clear Commitments

As the 2026 General Election approaches, it is important that those seeking public office understand that many nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers are still carrying the profound consequences of decisions made during the Covid-19 response. These concerns are not about political alignment, they are about trust, transparency, and the future safety of both the public and the workforce that serves them.

This letter seeks clear, public position statements from *all* candidates and all parties.

1. The removal of rights and the erosion of public trust

During Covid-19, many New Zealanders experienced restrictions that felt extreme, inconsistent, or lacked transparency. Information presented as absolute truth later proved incomplete or incorrect. This has left a lasting impact on public confidence in government decision-making and emergency powers.

Communities want to know: What safeguards will you support to ensure that emergency powers cannot override fundamental rights without clear accountability and transparent evidence?

2. The treatment of nurses and other clinicians

A significant number of nurses, doctors, midwives, HCAs, paramedics, and other health workers were stood down, dismissed, or pressured under threat of losing their livelihoods. Many complied under duress; others lost careers they had dedicated their lives to. This has caused deep moral injury and contributed to ongoing workforce shortages, burnout, and mistrust.

Clinicians want to know: How will you address the harm caused by dismissals, coercion, and loss of livelihood among health workers? What commitments will you make to ensure clinicians are protected, respected, and included in future emergency decision-making?

3. The ongoing lack of confidence in the health system

Many New Zealanders have lost trust in the government and do not believe it will protect them in future emergencies. They fear that the same patterns, coercion, lack of transparency, and disregard for frontline realities, could happen again.

We ask: What steps will you take to rebuild confidence in health governance, emergency planning, and scientific communication?

4. Rebuilding trust in public institutions

Clear, honest communication is essential in any crisis. Many New Zealanders feel that political messaging during Covid-19 damaged trust in science, public health, and government institutions.

We ask all parties: How will you ensure that future public communication is transparent, evidence-based, and free from political distortion?

A request for public responses

These questions are not about relitigating the past, they are about ensuring that New Zealand is better prepared, more transparent, and more accountable in the future. Communities and clinicians deserve clear answers from those seeking to lead.

We respectfully request that all parties and candidates provide public responses to the issues raised in this letter.

Kind regards

The Nurses Collective NZ