



Some plans for the IDI

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DRAFT - NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

Baseline measures:

(group of individuals receiving ADHD medication vs. a comparable group not receiving ADHD meds):

- School attendance (kids)
- Some measure of employment/income/benefit (adults)

An evaluation of whether ADHD diagnosis was obtained after some form of state interaction (child protection, justice, etc)

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Memo

Publishing the *New Zealand Clinical Principles Framework for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*

Date:	4 July 2025
Security level:	IN CONFIDENCE
To:	Audrey Sonerson, Director-General of Health
From:	Joe Bourne, Chief Medical Officer, Clinical, Community and Mental Health
Author:	Kieran Moorhead, Principal Policy Analyst, Mental Health, Addiction and Suicide Prevention Strategy & Policy
For your:	Information

Purpose of report

1. This memo provides information on publishing the *New Zealand Clinical Principles Framework for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (the framework) on the Ministry of Health's (the Ministry's) website in July 2025.

Context

2. The Ministry has worked with the health sector to develop a clinical framework to add an extra layer of protection for the quality of care of people with suspected or confirmed Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in New Zealand. The framework contains information for health professionals and the public on the standards they should expect for evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and treatment for ADHD.
3. The framework aligns with the regulatory changes proposed to come into effect in February 2026 to enable general practitioners and nurse practitioners to prescribe ADHD stimulant medications for adults in primary care settings.
4. To develop the framework, the Ministry convened a Clinical Reference Group. The Clinical Reference Group included representatives from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, and Nurse Practitioners New Zealand. It also included people with lived experience of ADHD including family and whānau of individuals with ADHD.
5. The Ministry will continue to work with Health New Zealand and professional workforce bodies to respond to the workforce training needs to support children and adults with ADHD.

6. The Ministry will publish the framework on the Ministry's website in July 2025 which will coincide with Kieran Moorhead, Principal Policy Analyst and Dr Jin Russell, Chief Clinical Advisor Child and Family presenting the framework at an international ADHD conference in Australia on 26 July 2025.

Risks and mitigations

7. There are some key risks that are important to understand as part of publishing the framework.

Risk: There may be the perception that the framework is a clinical guideline or is setting new mandated requirements for health professionals and clinical services.

Mitigation: The framework is not a new clinical guideline and does not mandate new requirements for the health sector. What the framework does is bring together the existing international evidence-based guidelines for ADHD and describes how these can be effectively and appropriately used within the New Zealand context. The framework clearly outlines the expected clinical standards for quality assessment, diagnosis and treatment of ADHD based on the existing guidelines. The existing mechanisms that ensure health professionals are working within their scope of practice will continue such as the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 and appropriate oversight from professional workforce bodies.

Risk: There may be a perception that the framework comes with investment to address the increasing numbers of children and adults seeking assessment and treatment for ADHD in New Zealand.

Mitigation: The Ministry and Health New Zealand are aware that children and their families are often waiting months to access a first specialist appointment with a paediatrician in order to diagnose and treat ADHD. The Ministry is working with Health New Zealand to improve access to specialist care which will help families receive more timely support for ADHD. For adults, assessment and diagnosis of ADHD is not currently publicly funded and the costs are borne by the individual. Assessment and diagnosis of people with ADHD is not a core part of general practice and is an extension beyond the comprehensive services that a general practice provides under capitation funding. However, the Ministry is engaging with primary care teams across New Zealand to understand where there are new innovative approaches incorporating specialist clinical workforces within general practice to diagnose and treat adults with ADHD.

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

1.	Note	the <i>New Zealand Clinical Principles Framework for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</i> will be published on the Ministry of Health's website in July 2025	Noted
2.	Note	you have approved Kieran Moorhead and Dr Jin Russell to present the framework at the Australian ADHD conference on 26 July 2025 which is occurring following its publication.	Noted

Signature _____

Audrey Sonerson

Director-General of Health

Date:

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