

VISA PAK ISSUE 400 — 10 MAY 2019

CHANGE TO ONSHORE PROCESS FOR CHEST X-RAY ONLY EXAMINATIONS

A new process for onshore applicants to obtain a chest x-ray only examination has been implemented as of 1 May 2019. The new process requires applicants to first attend an INZ Panel Medical Clinic to have their case created in eMedical and then be referred to a Panel Radiologist to have the chest x-ray examination completed. This change was communicated to all onshore panel clinics on 30 November 2018 and they were given until 1 May 2019 to adopt the process. The change relates to chest x-ray only cases and does not impact general or limited medical examinations.

Background

The process change has been introduced to ensure that a Panel Physician at the referring clinic is responsible for following up any abnormal findings with the applicant. Prior to this change being introduced clients were able to go directly to a Panel Radiologist for a chest x-ray only examination, this process circumvented the traditional New Zealand health care model where a GP coordinates any follow up that may be required. The old model posed several risks:

Communication of abnormal findings

If an applicant had abnormal findings on their CXR examination, INZ may request further medical information. This potentially created a situation where an applicant found out first from INZ that they have abnormalities on their chest x-ray examination.

Evidence of tuberculosis

If an applicant's chest x-ray examination shows evidence of TB then further intervention may be required by way of treatment and contact tracing. It is difficult to achieve this without a GP involved and given the nature of the disease it needs to be diagnosed as soon as possible.

Appropriate follow up

INZ saw a number of chest x-ray examination for applicants that indicate there is a non-TB related health issue. In these situations the applicant may not have had any contact with a New Zealand GP and therefore there was no reassurance that the applicant was receiving the medical care they needed.