

VISA PAK ISSUE 446 — 21 AUGUST 2020

## **PANEL PHYSICIAN AVAILABILITY – COVID-19 ALERT LEVELS 2 AND 3**

Under COVID-19 Alert Level 3, Panel Physicians in the Auckland region are unable to conduct immigration medical examinations. Physicians outside of Auckland operating under Alert Level 2 restrictions can conduct immigration medical examinations within Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines.

### **Summary**

On 12 August 2020, the Auckland region was placed under COVID-19 Alert level 3 restrictions. These restrictions will be in place until at least 26 August 2020.

Under Alert Level 3, clinics should follow the MoH's advice on the provision of healthcare services at this level. Unless in-person healthcare is required, healthcare services are advised to use virtual, non-contact consultations where possible (<https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19/restrictions/alert-system-overview/>).

Based on this advice panel clinics in the Auckland region are not conducting immigration medical examinations under Alert Level 3 restrictions.

Panel clinics under Alert Level 2 restrictions may continue to operate, however, they must comply with public health protection measures as outlined by the MoH. This means that there could be some delays in applicants being able to obtain immigration medical examinations or obtaining further medical information, as clinics may need to reduce numbers of patients per day to ensure social distancing is possible.

Panel clinics have been advised that applicants will not be negatively impacted if they cannot get an immigration medical examination or further medical information immediately because of the restrictions in place. Panel clinics have also been advised to refer applicants back to INZ if they are concerned about the impacts of any delays in obtaining medical information on their visa applications.

### **Steps**

If advising applicants they need to undergo an immigration medical examination, or to provide additional tests or medical reports, please note in your correspondence that the applicant will be unable to obtain this information if the region they live in is under COVID-19 Alert Level 3 restrictions, and that they will need to arrange an appointment once a move to Alert Level 2 has been made. The timeframe given to provide this information should therefore reflect that there are likely to be some delays in submitting the information.