

Hon. Chris Hipkins  
Minister for COVID-19 Response  
By email: [c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz)

Sunday 17 October, 2021

Dear Minister,

**RE: Self-isolation for essential health workforce migrants**

I write urging you to consider allowing highly skilled migrants, such as ICU nurses, coming to New Zealand to boost the health response to be able to isolate at home and bypass MIQ.

As each day passes, New Zealand's isolation goes from our greatest strength to our greatest weakness.

Every day, there are heart-breaking stories in the news of people desperate to get home to their families and skilled workers who'd love to be here helping with the COVID response.

I have been in contact with a man whose wife has an essential work visa and works as a critical care nurse in ICU. She left New Zealand to spend time with her dying mother in the UK and has been unable to return through the MIQ system. It has now been 3 months that this essential ICU nurse has been unable to help with the COVID response in New Zealand.

Last week, the Government announced that it will let people who've tested positive for COVID isolate at home. The policies for isolation are now inconsistent. The Government needs to let fully vaccinated people stuck offshore who've had a negative test skip MIQ and do the same.

The Government should announce a date and say that people will not have to go through MIQ if they're double vaccinated and have a negative pre-departure test.

My question to you is whether and by when you will change border restrictions to allow essential healthcare workers, such as ICU nurses, self-isolate and bypass MIQ.

I'd greatly appreciate if you could reply at your earliest convenience so I can relay your decision to these affected members of the public.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "BvV".

Brooke van Velden  
**Deputy Leader and Health Spokesperson**