



Open letter: Healthcare workers call on the New Zealand Government to address District Health Board (DHB) greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressed to:

Minister for Climate Change Issues and Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160, New Zealand

DHB greenhouse gas measurement, reduction and reporting

Healthcare in New Zealand (NZ) has a dirty secret – we are contributing to climate change, one of the biggest health threats of the 21st century. However, by reducing emissions, the health sector can help lead the transition to a low carbon society as well as promoting and protecting health.

The NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000 Section 22, Objective (j) requires that DHBs 'exhibit a sense of environmental responsibility by having regard to the environmental implications of its operations'. NZ has committed under the Paris Climate Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The health sector will need to contribute to this target.

Some DHBs (e.g. Counties Manukau DHB, Auckland DHB) have already taken steps to measure and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by participating in the CEMARS™ (certified emission measurement and reduction scheme) program administered by Enviro-Mark Solutions, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Landcare Research. This program is internationally recognised, ISO accredited, and administered by a crown entity.

There are many compelling reasons for DHBs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including cost savings, population health and health equity gains, healthcare quality improvement and reducing the health impacts of climate change.

WE THE SIGNATORIES CALL FOR:

1. **The Ministry of Health to set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for DHBs in line with commitments under the Paris Agreement.**
2. **The Ministry of Health to mandate all DHBs to measure, manage, and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the ISO 14064 standard.**
3. **DHBs to report progress towards greenhouse gas emissions reduction to the Ministry of Health annually.**

We recommend that the Ministry of Health negotiate a collective contract with Enviro-Mark Solutions on behalf of DHBs, and provide funding on an equitable basis to DHB's (eg by top-slicing) to meet costs of CEMARS™ participation.

Sincerely,

Dr David Galler, Intensive Care Specialist

On behalf of the Sustainable Health Sector National Network New Zealand (SHSNN).

Dr Rhys Jones and Dr Alex Macmillan, Public Health Medicine Specialists

On behalf of OraTaiao: The NZ Climate and Health Council.