

Media Advisory: Friday 3 April

Plunket launches prioritised virtual service

Plunket has launched a prioritised virtual service to ensure it can continue to support whānau following the Government's move to raise the COVID-19 Alert level to Level 4 which has meant the suspension of all Plunket's face-to-face services.

Chief Executive Amanda Malu says Plunket has been working on innovative and alternative ways of service delivery to ensure Plunket stays responsive to the pandemic and can continue to support whānau, especially those who need us the most.

"Plunket will continue to support all whānau, but during this time the way services will be offered, and the availability of those services will change." Ms Malu says.

"We want to reassure all of our clients that we are still there for them, and that our priority is to ensure that no parents or caregivers feel isolated or alone during this challenging time. So if there are whānau and families who have concerns and need us, Plunket can and will provide them with more direct support."

Following agreement with the Ministry of Health, Plunket has developed a virtual service for its Well Child services, which prioritises all families and whānau with new born tamariki from 0-3 months, whānau Māori, Pacific peoples with immediate needs, and all whānau who need us. Both this virtual service which will be delivered by phone and video conference, and the 24/7 support offered by PlunketLine are considered Essential Services.

"We hope this new prioritised service will help address inequities that might arise during this pandemic and ensure our service response is targeted at those who need us most during this time," Ms Malu says.

"Temporarily reducing our Well Child service in this way also means some of our people can be freed up to support the wider health system response. We have a large health workforce and we already have a number of Plunket staff redeployed to support Healthline, PlunketLine, community testing clinics and other essential health services across the country, and we only see the need for this growing"

Although for some whānau, their Well child service will be temporarily reduced, all whānau will remain enrolled with Plunket and will continue to have access to PlunketLine, online Parenting Education programmes, virtual community groups and other forms of parenting support. This includes Plunket's website and referrals to other service providers where required. Plunket is continuing to run Facebook Live chats and using other mediums to support our whānau.

Plunket will continue to review, adapt and learn as the weeks progress to make sure we are reaching all whānau who need our services.

ENDS

For more information please contact

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