



**Te Kaunihera Rata  
o Aotearoa**

Medical Council  
of New Zealand

## **DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

### **Statement on Hauora Māori (Māori health and wellbeing)**

#### **Introduction**

Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | Medical Council of New Zealand recognises the status of Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Health outcomes for Māori reflect ongoing inequities in access, treatment, and health sector and societal responsiveness. Historical and ongoing colonisation means that Māori are prevented from accessing resources that promote good health and experience much higher exposure to health harms compared to non-Māori. Māori are overrepresented in the most socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods, and experience higher levels of poverty at individual and household levels.

In recent decades, Treaty settlements and recovery of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems), alongside Māori health initiatives, have provided pathways to improved hauora Māori. As a doctor, you can use your knowledge, position and power to support to Māori achievements and aspirations, and assist Māori patients and communities on the journey towards health and wellbeing. This is relevant in all aspects of your medical practice, including patient care, teaching, leadership and management, research, advocacy and professional behaviour.

#### **Understand Indigenous rights to good health, self-determination and equity**

1. It is important that you understand the inherent Indigenous rights that Māori hold, as tangata whenua, to health, self-determination and equity.
2. You should develop and maintain knowledge and insight into how colonial histories, institutional structures and everyday medical practices shape health outcomes for Māori. This includes recognising how your clinical decisions, assumptions, behaviours, and influence within the health system can support health equity or reinforce inequity.

#### **Understand and respect Māori culture**

3. In your practice, you must recognise and show respect for the diversity of Māori identities, experiences, and expressions of culture. You must avoid cultural stereotypes and assumptions (for example about language, cultural practices, relationship with mātauranga Māori, or socioeconomic status) and approach each Māori patient and whānau with a willingness to listen and learn.

4. It is important that you develop an informed understanding of Māori cultural values and practices relevant to your patient population and clinical context. You should recognise that mātauranga Māori is diverse, and be guided by the patient and their whānau in how to apply your knowledge respectfully and appropriately in each situation.

#### **Advance equity for Māori**

5. As a doctor, you are professionally responsible for taking meaningful action to advance health equity for Māori.
6. Opportunities to enhance and uphold hauora Māori in your practice will vary, depending on your practice setting, but may include:
  - a. engaging in critical self-reflection to identify and address bias in your clinical thinking and decision-making
  - b. advocating for approaches that respond to the wider determinants of hauora Māori
  - c. supporting initiatives that strengthen Māori participation and leadership in the health workforce
  - d. using your professional privilege and influence to work in partnership with Māori to identify and dismantle unfair systems and power imbalances that undermine hauora Māori.
7. It is important to ensure that the care you provide results in equitable outcomes for Māori compared to non-Māori. Using data to assess and improve equity is a requirement in recertification programmes as well as a professional responsibility, and should be done in a way that is accurate, respectful, and aligned with national data protocols. Relevant measures may include ethnicity data quality audits, patient-reported outcomes, and satisfaction surveys.

## Appendix

### Terms we use in this statement

**Tangata whenua:** Indigenous people or 'people of the land'.

**Cultural stereotype:** an assumption about an individual based on their cultural identity.

**Equity:** the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people. Health equity recognises different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to get equitable health outcomes.

**Hauora Māori:** Māori health and wellbeing. The combination of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions that support holistic health and wellbeing for the individual, whānau/family, the community and the environment.

**Mātauranga Māori:** traditional, contemporary and future Māori knowledge systems – which are holistic, and include concepts of wairuatanga (spirituality), te reo Māori (language), tikanga Māori (customary practices) and kaitiakitanga (environmental stewardship).