

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of Health

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



Cressida Hall
General Manager
Australasian Integrative Medicine Association
cressidahall@aima.net.au

Andrea Lott
Executive Director
Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine
andrea@acnem.org

Ref. CH202518

Dear Cressida and Andrea

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 September 2020 on behalf of Australasian integrative medicine doctors and practitioners about an integrative medicine approach to COVID-19. I appreciate you writing to me, and I recognise your desire to improve the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders. I am unable to meet with you at this time due to the proximity of the general election.

The COVID-19 response is a rapidly evolving situation, and at this time there is no specific therapeutic substance that is indicated for the treatment of COVID-19. However, I can assure you that the Ministry of Health is keeping up to date with all emerging evidence and information in this area. I have also passed your correspondence and references on to Ministry of Health officials for their information.

With regards to community-wide use of integrative medicine, anyone in New Zealand is able to access complementary or alternative treatments if they choose to do so. However, it is not appropriate for the Minister or the Ministry of Health to be involved in the day-to-day treatment decisions for patients, as this is the role of treating clinicians, including general practitioners, practice nurses, and hospital specialists. All health care practitioners are required to work within their scope of practice, and to use evidence-based information to provide best practice advice when treating patients. Individual health care practitioners are best placed to consider integrative medicine approaches where relevant for their patients.

As you may be aware, products intended for a therapeutic purpose must first be approved through a process managed by Medsafe, New Zealand's Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority, before they can be generally supplied. More information about this process is available on Medsafe's website at www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/regguidance.asp.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I wish you and your members well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Health