



## Green light given for life-saving cancer treatment

New Zealand patients with neuroendocrine cancers (NETs) who have been unable to access regular treatment in Australia due to COVID-19 will now be treated in Auckland thanks to an interim arrangement.

"This is an example of cancer sector collaboration at its best," says Te Aho o Te Kahu, Cancer Control Agency Chief Executive Prof. Diana Sarfati.

"It has taken both determination and innovation from the Auckland District Health Board, Te Aho o Te Kahu, Ministry of Health, Pharmac, Mercy Radiology, the Cancer Society and the Unicorn Foundation NZ to find this solution for NETs patients needing urgent treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Until now the treatment known as PRRT, Peptide Receptor Radionuclide Therapy, has been only available in Australia. Around two dozen unwell patients have been unable to access treatment in Victoria and other parts of Australia because of travel restrictions imposed due to COVID-19.

With the Ministry of Health now having given the go-ahead for interim treatment to get underway in Auckland, the first patient is expected to begin treatment before the end of September.

"It is fantastic we have found a way to ensure treatment for these seriously ill New Zealanders," says Unicorn Foundation NZ CEO Michelle Sullivan. "We have been worried for our patients who have found themselves stranded unable to access treatment due to COVID-19 restrictions in Australia."

"We applaud the urgency with which this interim service is being set up and are deeply grateful for the enormous efforts over the last six weeks from all involved. We acknowledge their commitment to establishing a safe, interim service for urgent patients."

## About Unicorn Foundation New Zealand

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Unicorn Foundation NZ is the national charity dedicated to revolutionizing the way that neuroendocrine cancers are diagnosed and managed in New Zealand. We provide support for patients and their whānau, improve awareness of these cancers, assist research and advocate for improved access to treatment and diagnostic tests for all New Zealand neuroendocrine cancer patients.

## Contact details

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