

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



NZ Doctors Speak Out with Science

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Ref. CH203993

Dear NZ Doctors Speak Out with Science

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 June and 6 July 2021 to me and several other Members of Parliament about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Comirnaty. I have noted your concerns about its safety.

The vaccine rollout is a crucial part of New Zealand's COVID-19 response, and I am confident in the advice I have received from officials about the safety of the Comirnaty vaccine. Medsafe has approved Comirnaty based on its assessment that the benefits outweigh the risk of harm. Information about the vaccine assessment and approval process is available at <https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines/get-the-facts-about-covid-19-vaccination/how-covid-19-vaccines-are-developed-and-approved/>. Medsafe continues to receive data from large, ongoing clinical trials from vaccine companies, meaning they can monitor the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine right through the initial roll-out and into its ongoing use.

Medsafe and the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM) are also closely monitoring reports of suspected side effects to Comirnaty as the immunisation programme rolls out. Medsafe publishes weekly public safety reports providing information on the number of adverse events following immunisation for COVID-19 vaccines, which are available at www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-report-overview.asp. Each report covers up to approximately one month before the publication date to ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

I am aware that Medsafe has responded to the specific concerns you have raised in your correspondence. I also understand that the Ministry of Health's Chief Science Advisor, Dr Ian Town, has offered to discuss any further concerns you have about Comirnaty with him directly. I encourage you to take up Dr Town's offer if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', representing Chris Hipkins.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response