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NZ strengthens management of communicable diseases

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Reviews of managing infectious disease outbreaks

Work is underway to further strengthen New Zealand's management of communicable disease outbreaks in response to recommendations from two newly published reports.

The Ministry of Health has released two reports it commissioned into this year's influenza immunisation campaign and last year's measles outbreak in Auckland.

'It's vital we learn lessons from outbreaks to ensure we're in a strong position to best respond to the current COVID pandemic as well as prevent and respond to future outbreaks,' says Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield.

'In particular, both reports have identified important lessons that will inform preparation for rollout of a COVID-19 immunisation programme, when a safe and effective vaccine is approved for use here.

'We recognise there were some difficulties with vaccine distribution during this year's influenza immunisation campaign and last year's measles outbreak, leading to supply interruptions for providers. The Ministry is currently working with PHARMAC and the supplier to boost the number of the vaccines available for the 2021 season, and will work with providers to assist with planning, tracking and delivery of orders.'

'These two reports contain valuable findings and recommendations on ways we can better control communicable diseases here in Aotearoa. Both have already informed aspects of the COVID-19 response.'