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To the Medical Council of New Zealand

Please find below DPA’s feedback on proposed changes to the statement, ‘When another person is present during a consultation’.

## Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

Contact:

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# Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

The Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a pan-impairment disabled person’s organisation that works to realise an equitable society, where all disabled people (of all impairment types and including women, Māori, Pasifika, young people) are able to direct their own lives. DPA works to improve social indicators for disabled people and for disabled people to be recognised as valued members of society. DPA and its members work with the wider disability community, other DPOs, government agencies, service providers, international disability organisations, and the public by:

* telling our stories and identifying systemic barriers
* developing and advocating for solutions
* celebrating innovation and good practice

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The Articles of the UNCRPD most relevant to our feedback are:

## **Article 4.3: Involving disabled people and our organisations in**

## **decisions that affect us**

## **Article 22.2: Respect for Privacy**

## **Article 25: Health**

## **Article 26: Habilitation and Rehabilitation**

# DPA Feedback

DPA is pleased to provide feedback on the proposed changes to this important statement. We believe it is imperative that both health professionals and patients are all aware of the role of others present during any consultation, provide consent for another person being present, and that all are clear on their respective role and boundaries.

DPA is largely supportive of the proposed changes to the statement, but we do have some specific recommendations to improve the clarity of the statement.

# DPA’s Specific Recommendations

We have used the numbers in the proposed new statement, ‘When another person is present during a consultation’, to provide our recommendations.

## **5. As an Interpreter**

We feel this should not be in the section referring to when someone else attends a consultation on behalf of the patient. The text specifically says that an interpreter is there ‘for both the patient and the doctor’, so it should only be in the section titled ‘Interpreters’.

## **29 - 31.**

These sections deal with situations where a doctor or patient either refuse to have another person present at a consultation or they cannot agree on who that person should be. DPA believes that this section needs a bit of unpicking: we don’t believe that if a patient doesn’t want a student or someone observing a doctor for their professional development, that this should trigger a postponement of the appointment.

If patients are allowed to refuse someone being present, then they should not be penalised through a postponement of the appointment. In such a case the doctor can simply ask the next patient if they are happy to have students or observers present.

This is different to situations where someone is formally required to be present, or a workplace has a policy that a chaperone must be present for certain situations. It is clear to us that disagreement in this situation may trigger the postponement of the appointment or referral to another doctor, whereas refusing an observer or student should not.