

Position Description | Te whakaturanga ō mahi Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

Title	Senior Medical Officer, Genetic Pathologist			
Reports to	Clinical Director, Chemical Pathology & Genetics			
Location	Canterbury Health Laboratories (CHL)			
Department	Genetics			
Direct Reports	0		Total FTE	n/a
Budget Size	Opex	n/a	Capex	n/a
Delegated Authority	HR	n/a	Finance	n/a
Date	17/12/25			
Job band (indicative)	As per collective agreement			

The Health System in Aotearoa is entering a period of transformation as we implement the Pae Ora/Healthy Futures vision of a reformed system where people live longer in good health, have improved quality of life, and there is equity between all groups.

We want to build a healthcare system that works collectively and cohesively around a shared set of values and a culture that enables everyone to bring their best to work and feel proud when they go home to their whānau, friends and community. The reforms are expected to achieve five system shifts. These are:

1. The health system will reinforce Te Tiriti principles and obligations.
2. All people will be able to access a comprehensive range of support in their local communities to help them stay well.
3. Everyone will have equal access to high quality emergency and specialist care when they need it.
4. Digital services will provide more people the care they need in their homes and communities.
5. Health and care workers will be valued and well-trained for the future health system.

Te Mauri o Rongo – The New Zealand Health Charter

The foundation for how we ensure our people are empowered, safe and supported while working to deliver a successful healthcare system, is Te Mauri o Rongo – the New Zealand Health Charter. It guides all of us as we work towards a healthcare system that is more responsive to the needs of, and accessible to all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It applies to everyone in our organisation and sits alongside our code of conduct as our guiding document.

Te Mauri o Rongo consists of four pou (pillars) within it, including:

Wairuatanga – working with heart, the strong sense of purpose and commitment to service that health workers bring to their mahi.

Rangatiratanga – as organisations we support our people to lead. We will know our people; we will grow those around us and be accountable with them in contributing to Pae Ora for all.

Whanaungatanga – we are a team, and together a team of teams. Regardless of our role, we work together for a common purpose. We look out for each other and keep each other safe.

Te Korowai Āhuru – a cloak which seeks to provide safety and comfort to the workforce.

These values underpin how we relate to each other as we serve our whānau and communities.

Together we will do this by:

- caring for the people
- recognising, supporting and valuing our people and the work we all do
- working together to design and deliver services, and
- defining the competencies and behaviours we expect from everyone.

About the role

The primary purpose of the role is to:

Provide clinical and scientific leadership in genetic pathology to ensure the Genetics laboratory service delivers timely and reliable test results, with a critical focus on patient safety and quality assurance. This role is the clinical interface between the Genetics laboratory team and internal and external referrers and involves communicating with health professionals about genetic test results and genetic laboratory services. Key activities include supervising laboratory service delivery, analysing, interpreting, and integrating genomic data within a clinical context, writing, and reviewing genetic test reports, leading service development and new assay design.

Key Result Area	Expected Outcomes / Performance Indicators
Clinical and scientific operational responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works closely with the Clinical Director, Service Manager and Section Head to ensure that the laboratory provides appropriate support to clinical services with the provision of reliable and timely test results. • Liaises with internal and external clients and with other scientific/medical agencies. • Provides advice (in consultation with the Section Head) regarding the operational activities of the section, including advice on appointment of key scientific and technical staff. • Provides input on medical and scientific aspects of the daily operations of the section, particularly in the following areas:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ interpretation and reporting of various genetic tests ○ variant curation ○ genomic test workflow implementation, analysis and reporting including whole exome and whole genome sequencing. ○ method troubleshooting ○ test development, including assay design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in laboratory operational meetings and assisting with completing actions as required.
Service development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with the Clinical Director, Service Manager and Section Head on the medical, technical, and scientific strategic direction of the section and key operational issues including planning for the acquisition of new tests, the discarding of obsolete tests and changes of method.
Specialist expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides specialist input and guidance to Genetics team and clinical advice to health care staff and clients of the laboratory. • Participates in multidisciplinary team meetings. • Participates in national networks, professional committees and working groups.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with the Clinical Director and Section Head to ensure that the section provides a high-quality service to clients in accordance with IANZ requirements including leading quality improvement initiatives, reviewing external quality assurance programme results, participating in internal auditing, and supporting quality incident investigations. • In situations where the technical quality of service provided by the sections is likely to be compromised or the business position of the unit is likely to be threatened, the Genetic Pathologist will work closely with the Section Head, Service Manager, and the Clinical Director in finding a solution.
Teaching & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises on and providing, where appropriate, for the professional and developmental needs of registrars, technical and scientific personnel of Canterbury Health Laboratories and other Health NZ personnel. • Supervises registrars and scientists according to RCPA fellowship training requirements. • Ensures new scientific and clinical knowledge/information is communicated through CHL and incorporated in training.
Continued professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains and develops his/her own areas of professional skill including completing annual success and development objectives agreed to between the incumbent and appropriate senior staff and having a personal development plan relevant to scientific needs and personal interest.
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is performed and completed in the required time consistent with CHL quality standards. • Communicates accurate and timely information to the Clinical Director and other colleagues. • Attends relevant meetings as required.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains focused on the pursuit of Māori health gain as well as achieving equitable health outcomes for Māori.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports tangata whenua- and mana whenua-led change to deliver mana motuhake and Māori self-determination in the design, delivery and monitoring of health care. • Actively supports kaimahi Māori by improving attraction, recruitment, retention, development, and leadership.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to helping all people achieve equitable health outcomes. • Demonstrates awareness of colonisation and power relationships. • Demonstrates critical consciousness and on-going self-reflection and self-awareness in terms of the impact of their own culture on interactions and service delivery. • Shows a willingness to personally take a stand for equity. • Supports Māori-led and Pacific-led responses.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads, nurtures, and develops our team to make them feel valued. • Provides leadership that shows commitment, urgency and is visibly open, clear, and innovative whilst building mutually beneficial partnerships with various stakeholders both internally and externally. • Operates with a high degree of professional autonomy in managing scientific and medical activities. • Oversight and governance are provided by the Clinical Director to ensure alignment with departmental priorities, quality standards, and organisational objectives.
Innovation & Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open to new ideas and create a culture where individuals at all levels bring their ideas on how to 'do it better' to the table. • Models an agile approach – tries new approaches, learns quickly, adapts fast. • Develops and maintains appropriate external networks to support current knowledge of leading practices.
Collaboration and Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models good team player behaviour, working with colleagues to not allow silo thinking and behaviour at decision making level to get in the way of doing our best and collegially supports others to do the same. • Clients receive polite, courteous, and prompt responses to their requests or enquiries. • Works with peers in Hauora Māori Service and Pacific Health Business Unit to ensure the voice of and direct aspirations of Māori and Pacific People are reflected in planning and delivery of services.

Health & safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises leadership and due diligence in Health and Safety matters and ensures the successful implementation of Health and Safety strategy and initiatives. Takes all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate and mitigate risks and hazards in the workplace that could cause harm, placing employee, contractor and others' health, safety, and wellbeing centrally, alongside high-quality patient outcomes. Leads, champions, and promotes continual improvement in health and wellbeing to create a healthy and safe culture. Recognises unsafe procedures and practices and notifies the Department Health and Safety Rep and/or Section Head.
Compliance and Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes responsibility to ensure appropriate risk reporting, management and mitigation activities are followed. Ensures compliance with all relevant statutory, safety and regulatory requirements applicable to the Business Unit. Understands, and operates within, the financial & operational delegations of their role, ensuring peers and team members are also similarly aware.
Other duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertakes any other duties as reasonably directed by the Clinical Director or Service Manager from time to time.

Matters which must be referred to the Clinical Director

- Strategic decisions: Changes to service scope, introduction of new test platforms, or significant research directions.
- Resource allocation: Requests for additional FTE, major equipment purchases, or budget variations.
- External communications: Media engagement, conference presentations representing CHL, or collaborations with external organisations.
- Clinical or operational risk: Any issue that could impact patient safety, accreditation compliance, or turnaround times.
- Policy exceptions: Deviations from standard operating procedures, ISO 15189 requirements, or organisational policies.
- Conflict resolution: Escalation of staff performance issues, complaints from clinicians, or disputes affecting service delivery.

Relationships

External	Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients and patients of Canterbury Health Laboratories Public service and private sector scientists Other laboratories (national and international) Medical research facilities (national and international) Government and regulatory agencies (e.g., Ministry of Health, WHO, NGOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical Director, Genetics Section Head, Genetics Service Manager, Genetics Chief of Pathology, CHL Divisional Lead, CHL Other staff within the Genetics Department and Canterbury Health Laboratories Students and trainees

About you – to succeed in this role

You will have

Essential:

- Hold an appropriate medical qualification recognised by the New Zealand Medical Council as a pathologist, for example FRCPA in Genetic Pathology or other equivalent post graduate qualification.
- Eligible for vocational registration in Genetic Pathology with the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ).
- Maintain a current Annual Practising Certificate by participation in a re-certification programme.
- Experience in somatic and germline genetic pathology, ideally in diagnostic laboratory.
- A critical scientific mind and approach to problem solving.
- Excellent communication skills to support various communication tasks such as relationship management with diverse range of health professionals, writing and collating clinical documents, giving, and receiving feedback, presenting and teaching.
- Experience in implementing Te Tiriti o Waitangi in action.

Desired:

- Extended experience within a diagnostic Genetics laboratory including complex results analysis and reporting.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain ISO 15189 compliance and participate in internal/external assurance programmes.
- A credible and dependable image
- Publications in Genetic Pathology

You will be able to Essential:

- Establish and maintain positive working relationships with people at all levels within the public and private sectors, related industry and community interest groups and the wider national and international communities.
- Demonstrate a strong drive to deliver and take personal responsibility.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including how to apply Te Tiriti principles in a meaningful way in your role.
- Take care of own physical and mental wellbeing, and have the stamina needed to go the distance.
- Maximise the quality and contributions of individuals and teams to achieve the organisation's vision, purpose and goals.
- Demonstrate self-awareness of your impact on people and invests in your own leadership practice to continuously grow and improve.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of personal, professional and institutional behaviour through commitment, loyalty and integrity.

Desired:

- Demonstrate the vision and flexibility to accommodate to change.
- To mentor, train and develop staff.

This position description is intended as an insight to the main tasks and responsibilities required in the role and is not intended to be exhaustive. It may be subject to change, in consultation with the job holder.