

Te Rerenga

News from the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation



Western Bay of Plenty
Primary Health Organisation

TŪNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU
O TE HARAKEKE



Meri Kirihimete!

The start of the festive period is when we reflect on the year and begin to look forward to spending more time with friends and whānau over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

It is fair to say the past year has been one of enormous change, some of it planned and some of it an extension of the unpredictability we all face working in health during a global pandemic.

COVID-19 and the arrival of the Delta variant in our Bay of Plenty community continues to impact the way we deliver services. With an expectation that more people with the virus will require care and monitoring at home as they recover, we have established our COVID Primary Response Team. Their work is already underway and it is valuable mahi to support General Practice teams caring for patients self-isolating. We expect this work will become part of our PHO's 'business as usual' activity as COVID-19 becomes endemic in New Zealand.

It's clear that managing a global

pandemic is relentless and it requires resilience and fortitude. When I look back on the collective achievements of our PHO, Iwi partner organisations and General Practice teams in 2021, I feel proud to be part of a health network that is so committed to keeping our community safe. The way everyone comes together for this common cause is a credit to our network's spirit and whanaungatanga. Thank you for your tireless efforts.

On behalf of the executive team, I wish our staff General Practices, and Iwi partners a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year. Take time when you can to relax and enjoy the company of your loved ones over summer.

Nāku, noa nā
Lindsey Webber

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Community co-design hui on Matakana Island

A community co-design hui on Matakana Island last month marked a milestone in the journey to better connect island residents with health services using technology.

The hui, led by staff from the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation with support from the Bay of Plenty District Health Board and Ministry of Health, was organised for Māori whānau and Te Awanui Hauora Trust to share their healthcare experiences on the island, specifically relating to accessing services.

The recent installation of a radio mast and 4G network technology on Matakana Island has created opportunities to deliver telehealth services to residents. Information collated by the group at the workshop will be used to inform the next steps in the rollout plan.

PHO director of Māori health Kiri Peita says the hui generated valuable feedback from residents and reinforced how technology has the potential to be a

game changer for people living in remote communities.

“Residents are excited about the opportunity to improve their access to healthcare. Living on an island presents multiple challenges to accessing healthcare, including transport, cost and time. The roll-out of a telehealth service, in consultation with these communities, is an important step towards improving equity of health outcomes for Māori.”

Having access to high-speed broadband on the island means that for the first time, residents will be able to have high resolution video consults with GPs, nurses and hospital outpatient appointments. The services will complement the fortnightly GP clinic provided by Ngati Kahu Hauora.

Te Awanui Hauora Trust COO Te Uta



Major progress was made on delivering telehealth services to Matakana Island with the installation of an 8m high stainless steel radio mast in April.

Roretana says residents currently pay up to \$80 for a return barge trip to take them into town for specialist appointments so the ability to have digital consultations will be a great help.

COVID-19 has underlined for everyone the important role that technology plays in reducing barriers to a range of services and keeping people connected, she adds.

“The safety and wellbeing of our whānau is all important for us. Telehealth services mean that when we can’t be connected physically, we can still be connected digitally, and not just in health. The connectivity means we can explore more online learning opportunities too.”

The journey to improve access to health services on Matakana Island started in February 2020 during a community hui when residents first shared their healthcare experiences with the PHO. Since then, the PHO, DHB and Western Bay of Plenty District Council joined forces to provide the 8m high radio mast which was installed next to the Hauora clinic in April, as well as 4G network technology, diagnostic equipment and technical expertise. The radio technology used is the same type used in outback Australia.



The workshop on Matakana Island was facilitated by Keita Twist, a service designer and Māori co-design practitioner from the Ministry of Health.

New clinical advisors at the helm

Please join us in welcoming two new clinical advisors to the PHO.

Dr James Peckett, a GP at Mount Medical Centre, and Michelle Meyer, a nurse practitioner from Tara Rd Medical Centre, have stepped into the roles, and are supporting Dr Claire Isham who returns as the PHO's Clinical Director after serving as GP Liaison Lead for the Bay of Plenty DHB's COVID-19 vaccine team.

James moved to Tauranga with his wife Renee, also a GP at Mount Medical, about 10 years ago from Auckland and, with their three children, enjoys the Bay of Plenty lifestyle. In becoming a clinical advisor, he's looking forward to serving his patients at a different level and meeting other clinicians across primary and secondary care. "Through this role, I hope to increase the quality of local primary care services, raise the profile of services we offer, and ultimately get care to our patients quicker."

For James, working in healthcare during a global pandemic proved how agile General Practice teams could be and how important they are in patients' lives as the 'preferred first point of contact' in a crisis.



Dr James Peckett

"COVID made us more nimble in the services that we provide, and how we do things. Each week seemed to bring a new challenge, and I think that General Practices are better now at responding to change. A huge positive has been the enhancement to teamwork that only a liminal experience like a pandemic can develop."

James expects that upcoming health reforms will require General Practices to be light-footed again, as they navigate how to incorporate business as usual activity into a new model for delivering primary care services. "Our agility through COVID has us well-placed to respond to this challenge."

"COVID made us more nimble in the services that we provide, and how we do things. Each week seemed to bring a new challenge, and I think that General Practices are better now at responding to change." *Dr James Peckett*

Michelle has been a nurse practitioner since 2017. Before working at Tara Road Medical Centre, she worked for a practice implementing the Health Care Homes model and delivered services to a high needs population, focusing on long-term conditions, such as COPD, diabetes and heart failure.

She was there during the 2020 lockdown and first experienced the benefits of telephone triage, phone consultations and morning huddles to share daily information with the practice team.

"Communicating updates from the PHO and Ministry of Health in a daily huddle created a real sense of teamwork. Now, more than 18 months into the pandemic, working with COVID and the daily challenges in providing health services to patients with COVID symptoms is my 'new



Michelle Meyer

normal'. I enjoy a mix of in-person, phone consultations and seeing acute patients in a cabin while wearing full PPE. Teamwork and flexibility to the way we offer services makes each day one I don't mind getting out of bed for."

The clinical advisor role, with its focus on processes, policies and communicating these to practices, is one she is well-suited for. "I've always been involved in supporting staff with the challenges of change and I see this role as an extension of this; helping clinicians have up to date information and be part of a team that has a voice, and ear for the practice teams within the PHO.

"...the daily challenges in providing health services to patients with COVID symptoms is my 'new normal'." *Dr Michelle Meyer*

"This position also allows me to not only use my nursing and nurse practitioner experience, but years of working in collaboration and partnership with GPs and practice teams encouraging teamwork, quality improvement, and equitable services to meet the needs of the population."

RNZGP Community Service Medals awarded to local doctors

Two Bay of Plenty doctors have been awarded a Community Service Medal by the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners for their outstanding contribution to general practice through work in their communities.

Dr Murray Smith, who retired in March 2021, was a general practitioner at the Ōmokoroa Medical Centre for 25 years.

Initially, Murray worked as the sole full-time GP in the practice, but as the community grew and developed, he was part of a group that developed the current purpose-built Ōmokoroa Medical Centre in 2011.

In 2013 when the medical centre became a teaching practice, Murray began supervising registrars as they went through their training to become qualified general practitioners. His stable and practical teaching environment has seen many of his registrars stay and work in the community.

For the College, he spent time as a regular examiner for the General Practitioner Education Programme (GPEP) exams.

Dr Rachel Shouler is a GP at Tarawera Medical Centre, works as a GP liaison for Bay of Plenty District Health Board and is the

Clinical Director at Eastern Bay of Plenty Primary Health Alliance (EBPHA).

Over the past 12 months she has played a significant part of the COVID-19 response for the Eastern Bay of Plenty community. She has been involved in the set-up of community testing centres, the delivery of COVID-19 swabbing tests, and has supported other practices through this period of uncertainty.

Rachel was also one of the medical professionals who went to Whakatāne Hospital to help treat patients affected by the Whakaari White Island eruption in December 2019.

The Humphrey Rainey Medal for Excellence, awarded to the doctor with the highest marks in the College's clinical and written exams, went to Dr George Ansley, a GP at Otumoetai Doctors.



Dr Rachel Shouler

Removing barriers to vaccination

Putting time and effort into ringing patients and having one-on-one conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine has been the key to Fifth Avenue Family Practice reaching more of its Māori population.

The practice also organised two Saturday clinics on 18 September and 6 November that were dedicated to vaccinating its Māori and Pasifika patients, and any extended whānau members enrolled elsewhere.

Nurse practitioner Julia Perry says the Saturday morning clinics made it easier for whānau to come in together.

"It's hard for some people to get in during the week around work and other commitments. Saturdays are heaps better for whānau, and we saw that during our clinics when we had Mums and Dads come in with their older children and teens;



Three members of the Taane whānau took up the opportunity to get vaccinated together at Fifth Avenue Family Practice.

everyone got vaccinated at the same time."

As a Health Care Home practice, the team has been exploring how it can adopt new ways of working to improve health and wellness for its Māori patients. The practice has 1,108 enrolled Māori patients aged 12 and over who are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, and removing barriers to vaccination is a major priority.

In September, Julia and lead receptionist Debbie Irving, who are both members of the practice's Māori Health Working Group, He Waka Eke Noa, worked through a list of unvaccinated Māori patients and rang each one to invite them to the first Saturday clinic or start a conversation about getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Julia says it was very time-consuming but highly rewarding work.

"We sent all our patients texts and emails, but ringing our Māori patients was a more personable way of engaging them, and everyone responded positively; even those who declined the invitation were grateful for the call."



Dr Murray Smith

12 Bay of Plenty doctors were also awarded Fellowships of the RNZCGP at the recent annual conference. From the Western Bay BOP PHO network, they include:

Dr Sarah Oberer (Dee Street Medical Centre)

Dr Bushra Wahid (Girven Road Medical Centre)

Dr Anita Page (Chadwick Healthcare Greerton)

Dr Matthijs Klaarenbeek (The Doctors Phoenix)

Dr Clare Duffett (The Doctors Tauranga)

Over the phone, Julia says they were able to answer questions about the vaccine and use the time to carry out diabetes consults and arrange prescriptions.

“When we rang, we encouraged them to invite any of their whānau to join them on the day, even if they weren’t patients with us. The aim was to get more Māori patients feeling comfortable that they could come through our door.”

Ahead of each clinic, the team reviewed who was booked in, identifying those patients they needed to make extra time for, such as those overdue for a smear, blood tests, or a blood pressure check.

“If they wanted to sort those things out on the day with a GP or myself while they were with us, they got them done too,” says Julia. “I saw a whole family, including a Dad, the Mum for a script and their child for an eczema review. It was an awesome opportunity to catch people and make the most of their time, especially when they had to wait after getting vaccinated anyway.”

Data driving efficiency



Improvements to data reporting over the past 15 months have made it easier for the PHO and General Practices to tap into information to drive health improvements, business efficiencies and narrow the equity gap between Māori and non-Māori patients.

All practices in the PHO network have benefited from the improvements, with those participating in the Health Care Home (HCH) model of care making good use of the data intelligence to fine-tune how they care for patients and whānau.

HCH project lead Jeane Rossiter credits the PHO’s former digital business and reporting analyst, Sankhala Raffel, for delivering the improvements.

“The work that Sankhala did for us was phenomenal, so we’re pleased she’s not completely lost to us in her new data role at the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, with whom we have a working relationship as part of the HCH contract.”

To develop the new population and performance data reports, Sankhala worked with Datacraft, a third-party provider of data and analytic services. A deliberate focus was taken to provide reporting that supports efforts to address inequities.

“We applied an equity lens to the work to enable us to report Māori and non-Māori population data, and that has been a big shift in how we report. We now routinely extract this data from the Patient Management Systems that practices use and review it to report the disparity that exists between these populations.”

New dashboard-style reporting and better systems were also developed to make sense of the complex data streams sourced from various platforms across the regional health network.

“The major reporting challenge we had at the start was how data was coming in from so many different places involving primary, secondary

and national data sets. Practices also use different systems. To solve this, we set up data feeds that connect with Thalamus, the online reporting platforms used by practices.

“Datacraft created a new reporting dashboard for us which has reduced the number of manual queries we make. The new trend analysis reports are also very useful for the practices who access them.”

Not only has the work ensured that reports meet the DHB contract and national standards for HCH reporting, but the data is also “reliable, reproducible and relevant,” says Jeane.

“It’s data needed to inform baseline performance and improvement. It’s one thing to measure and show practices how they’re doing, but if we want to do better, we must provide real-time information to use for improvements against a target.”

Importantly, the data can be used to demonstrate the value of the HCH care model. “Using the web-based reporting platform, Thalamus, it’s very easy now to examine the performance of individual practices on a range of measures, and compare them with practices that sit outside the project.”

Jeane adds that practices are also benefiting from being able to go online and see, in real-time, their patients’ presentations, admissions, and discharges from hospital. “Real-time data is a game changer for practices, with numerous applications that support proactive and preventative care, including post-discharge care to reduce readmission rates.”

Epic Health expansion

Epic Health has expanded into new premises at 32 Willow St as part of broader plans to become a one-stop shop for family healthcare needs in Tauranga's CBD.

The practice previously operated out of Health Quarters on Willow St. Epic Health, including GP Dr Emma Stanley, continues to work closely with the Health Quarters' team of multi-disciplinary professionals, including personal trainers, nutrition coaches, exercise physiologist and physiotherapist.

Practice manager Wendy Sharplin says they've received wonderful feedback from patients to the move, just one block up the road.

"In a short time, we've grown as a practice and our patients feel like our little family. Everyone is enjoying the larger space, but our relationship with Health Quarters will continue through cross-referrals, as we're very much still an integrative GP practice that values preventative care advice provided by allied health professionals."

Those relationships extend to the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, which provides care co-located with Epic

Health via the Community Orthopaedic Triage Service (COTS) team, and the musculoskeletal team from the Physiotherapy Outpatients department.

As well as providing broad family healthcare, Dr Stanley is highly regarded for care relating to sexual harm and musculoskeletal medicine. She currently treats patients for chronic pain and problems with the musculoskeletal system under supervision.

Epic Health's central location has seen it work closely with the University of Waikato this year, providing care to students. It has also created the Epic Patient Association, an advocacy group made up of patients who will meet monthly to provide feedback to the practice's leadership team.

The practice has a vision to be innovative in the way it provides health and wellbeing services and embraces the benefits that come with collaboration.

It currently manages a patient cohort with Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS), and



Enjoying larger premises on Willow St are (from left) Epic Health practice manager Wendy Sharplin, administrator Shannon Hardcastle, patient Debbie Jacob, nurse Robyn Wichman, administrator Paula Parker and Dr Emma Stanley

plans to provide support group meetings for those patients as well as others with diabetes and long-term health needs. Epic Health is also looking forward to providing an in-house counselling service and physiotherapist in the future.

Educating community on law change

To reduce children's exposure to second-hand smoke, from 28 November it is illegal to smoke or vape in a vehicle that has children under 18-years-old in it, whether the vehicle is moving or not.

The Western Bay of Plenty Smokefree Coalition and our local primary health network have been educating communities about the law change and encouraging people to avoid smoking and vaping inside a vehicle by adopting practical steps to change their behaviour.

PHO health promotion coordinator Tiana Bennett says there is very high

public support for the law change and while many smokers agree with it, there are still some people struggling to make the transition to a smokefree car.

The coalition, with support from Waipu Hauora at Matapihi, have distributed 'Drive Smokefree For Tamariki' campaign resources, including posters, car air fresheners and bumper stickers, to targeted communities, including kura



Drive Smokefree for Tamariki air fresheners.



PHO team members celebrated Diabetes Action Month by participating in Sneaker Day.

Stepping up for diabetes

Our PHO team got right behind an exciting new initiative from Diabetes New Zealand last month.

Team members wore their sneakers to work on 19 November in support of the first ever Sneaker Friday, a nationwide event encouraging New Zealanders to 'step up' for diabetes.

As well as doubling as a fundraiser, Sneaker Friday was one of many activities held during Diabetes Action Month to raise

awareness and bring people together to take action over what has become New Zealand's largest and fastest growing condition.

Diabetes nurse educator Brenda Newman says the PHO's diabetes team was actively involved in events throughout November, with a focus on education in primary care.

A Diabetes Fundamentals Day was held for nursing staff who are either new to primary care or needed upskilling in supporting their patients diagnosed with diabetes to manage their condition. "We covered information addressing inequities in care for Māori and Pasifika patients, the new diabetes guidelines, lifestyle changes relating to exercise and diet, and tips for how to run a nurse-led clinic." Guest speakers included a clinical pharmacist from Medwise and a podiatrist from Foot Mechanics.

The team also held an insulin start day for practices whose nursing staff needed upskilling on how to do insulin starts for patients. "This addressed barriers to starting insulin, the new guidelines and healthy eating for those on insulin."

Philippa Jones, the PHO's director of nursing and workforce development, also educated healthcare assistants in primary care on pre-diabetes and how to support patients.

In the spirit of kotahitanga, a network day was held at Huriā Marae for all providers of diabetes services across Tauranga Moana in November. Participants included PHO exercise physiologist Caitlin Milne, who continues to support patients diagnosed with pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes in the community through lifestyle wellness education and self-management courses.

kaupapa Māori, whānau at kōhanga reo, and 25 other hauora across Tauranga Moana. People submitted photos of their stickers and air fresheners on display to win petrol vouchers.

Waipu Hauora manager Riria Gibbons says their efforts also focussed on educating rangatahi (young people) about the new legislation. "As well as providing information to young people who attended a careers information night at Huriā Marae, we encouraged rangatahi to show their support for the campaign by sending us TikTok videos to win a prize.

"Māmā taking part in our Hāpai Pēpi sessions also took part. Using social media and involving the younger cohort, in particular, helped us to generate a lot of support for the smokefree kaupapa."



Drive Smokefree for Tamariki resources, including posters, air fresheners and bumper stickers, were distributed by a hard-working group of people to educate whānau about the law change.



Our team participated in a mahi toi (artwork) project to express what the PHO's whakataukī means to us.

Expressing our whakataukī through art

Staff have been busy creating a collaborative artwork inspired by the PHO's whakataukī – *Tūngia te uru kia tupu whakaritorito te tupu o te harakeke*, 'Clear the undergrowth so that the new shoots of the flax will grow'.

A workshop in Te Puna, facilitated by artist and teacher Maraea Timutimu, provided participants with an opportunity to express their creativity and reflect on the spirit of the whakataukī as well as the PHO's cultural journey so far – *Tā mātou mahi hei whakaohoho*.

Using a combination of harakeke (flax), harakeke seeds, fibres and text stamps, everyone made impressions in clay that they had rolled out to create an individual artwork. Each clay composition will be treated with a tinted wash then lightly varnished. In time they will come together to form a collective art installation, taking pride of place in the PHO's First Avenue office.

Earlier this year, Maraea joined the PHO on its haerenga around Tauranga Moana with Ngāi Tamarāwaho kaumātua Matakori Des Tata to learn about local history and sites of significance for the PHO's iwi partners, Ngāti Ranginui and Ngāi Te Rangi.

She says working with harakeke was symbolic of both the whakataukī and the

PHO's everyday mahi across the Western Bay.

"Harakeke is very functional and connects people to other people, places and time. As Māori, we also know that whakataukī can have multiple meanings; there's lots of expressions and we connect with them in different ways – all are valid."

The variety of words and textures used in each artwork also reflect the rich cultural diversity of the PHO and its community, she adds.

"With collaborative artwork, you can't control the outcome; everyone is interpreting the whakataukī in their own way. But that is what is so special. Every composition is unique through the words they've chosen and the different harakeke elements they've used to create patterns and texture.

"Once complete, the mahi toi will be a creative celebration of cultural diversity and the strength that comes from the group."

IN BRIEF

Super Saturday reflection

General Practice teams pulled out all the stops to get behind Super Saturday on October 16.

Eleven of the PHO's practices participated in the national vaccination event with successful vaccination numbers as a result. PHO chief executive Lindsey Webber says the day was a huge success.

"Our GPs, practice nurses, admin teams and many of our PHO staff really got behind the Super Saturday National Vaccination Day. Even though we received a very short notice period, our practices actively embraced the day with added activities to make it an event to remember.

"I really want to thank them for their huge efforts and commitment to the COVID-19 vaccination rollout."

A competition was held to acknowledge the occasion and the enthusiastic approach taken by practices. A \$500 Prezzy card was awarded to The Doctors Phoenix.

Vaccine first dose milestone target reached

The Bay of Plenty district reached its 90 percent first dose COVID-19 vaccination target on 30 November.

By that date, more than 194,000 people in the region had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

More than 80 per cent of the district's residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Within the Pasifika community, more than 95 percent have received both doses.

To reach the 90 percent fully vaccinated milestone across the total population, a further 21,000 people in the district need to receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to data from the Ministry of Health on 29 November 2021.

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