



Western Bay of Plenty
Primary Health Organisation

TŪNGIA TE URURUA KIA TUPU
WHAKARITORITO TE TUPU
O TE HARAKEKE

Te Rerenga

NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2024

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Gateway to rangatahi well-being

A closer look at the nurse-led School-Based Health Services Programme, making a difference in the lives of students in the Western Bay of Plenty.

Amidst the hugely dynamic period that adolescence presents in a young person's life, emerges a team committed to guiding and guarding the health and well-being of over 11,000 secondary students in the Western Bay of Plenty. Led by nurses, the School-Based Health Service (SBHS) programme stands as a beacon of support, addressing the unique health needs of our youth. As we delve into this initiative's numbers and narratives, it becomes evident that this is not just healthcare; it's a lifeline for many navigating the tumultuous journey towards adulthood.

Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) has held the School-Based Health Services contract since October 2015. Funded by Te Whatu

Ora, the programme offers free-of-charge school-based health services for students, years 9 – 13, in ten secondary schools and three alternative education facilities, Monday to Friday. "Our vision is to empower young people to access health services independently once they leave school. We want to foster students' health literacy, resilience, and proactivity to engage in their health management", described Sarah Johnson, WBOP PHO Clinical Services Lead.

Last year alone, the service witnessed 7,623 student visits, a 5% increase compared to 2022. Of the students seen, 37% were Māori, and 4.7% were Pacific Peoples, reflecting the initiative's focus on priority populations. Behind these numbers is a skilled team. The programme is delivered by qualified registered School Health Nurses, with broad experience in delivering youth health services, with part-time support from general practitioners. The team recently increased from 10 to 14 nurses in mid-February.

"Our vision is to empower young people to access health services independently once they leave school."

— Sarah Johnson, WBOP PHO
Clinical Services Lead

The programme does not require enrolment, and a consultation can be started by students, parents, caregivers, school staff, the school nurse, or the general practitioner. School Health Services Lead, Paula Ngatai, highlighted the programme's significance, stating that "not all teenagers feel comfortable talking about their health concerns to their parents or carer, which often becomes a barrier to accessing a general practitioner. So, we are there, easily available for them. They don't need to ask anyone else; it is free, easy to access and confidential."

Continued on pages – 2 & 3



– The School-Based Health Services team at the WBOP PHO in February.

The heartbeat of the programme

**Beyond the metrics,
School-Based Health Services
true value echoes in every
life it touches.**

The School-Based Health Service statistics highlight the programme's positive impact on the community, yet its true significance is most evident in the untold stories of the lives it touches. One of these narratives, veiled in privacy to respect the individual's journey, illuminates the power of compassionate and persistent care – this 15-year-old wahine found support to address health, mental and social

challenges, changing her life trajectory. We will call her Aroha, and the nurse, Kim.

It all started with an ingrown toenail. The wound's infection led Aroha, a newcomer in both school and the city, to visit Kim. Daily dressing changes for over three months and attempts to involve her parents failed to yield improvement, prompting the School Health Nurse to secure free Urgent Care assistance through the Acute Demand fund for a minor surgery. After a resection at the hospital, registering her with a general practitioner for follow-up consults and antibiotics prescribed by the nurse, the infection finally started to heal.

After almost six months of chatting with Aroha, Kim had uncovered broader issues, referring the student to the school counsellor. The young girl had to work to cover her general practitioner consults as well as provide herself with daily food. Due to that, her school performance was plummeting, marked by sleeping during classes or missing them completely. Parent support was limited, and she presented with panic attacks, and higher than usual menstrual pain.

As Aroha's needs were addressed, she started to flourish. Kim reflected, "it was remarkable to witness her confidence soar. She stood up for herself".

Priority populations

The School-Based Health Services is tailored for students from year 9 to 13, typically aged 13 to 18 years old. This age range is strategically chosen considering that, beyond this point, health services are no longer free, potentially posing a financial barrier to accessing general practice.

Moreover, as adolescents progress into this stage, the significance of navigating sexual health becomes increasingly crucial. The programme aims to bridge the knowledge gap and ensure access to services and resources by offering professional guidance and a safe space for students to seek answers.

Focusing on narrowing health inequities, the service is committed to reaching Māori, Pacific Peoples, LGBTQA+, students in care, and those with

disabilities – populations recognised as, currently, not well served by the health system.

"We aim to provide a responsive, evidence-based, youth-friendly and inclusive health service with a focus on equity access and utilisation for students with high needs, using an integrated whole person, whole system approach", explained Sarah Johnson, WBOP PHO Clinical Services Lead.

Sexual and mental health appear as main concerns



— Leading the programme, School Health Nurses hold monthly hui at the WBOP PHO.

Students turn to the School-Based Health Service for a spectrum of comprehensive needs, from emergency care to physical and mental assessment and treatments.

Given the age group, there is a natural emphasis on sexual health, which was the reason for 30% of the visits last year. Students visit the nurses to seek

information, contraception options and condoms.

Mental health also constitutes a significant aspect of students' well-being, and it corresponded to 17% of the visits last year. In response, students are guided towards counselling or referred to the Coordinated Primary Options Mental Health team within WBOP PHO. ▲

School Health Services

- ▲ Provide individual student consultations. These can be initiated by students, parents, caregivers, school staff, the school nurse, or the GP.
- ▲ Support groups based sexual health education led by teachers to prevent STIs and teenage pregnancy.
- ▲ Undertake HEEADSSS assessments (a comprehensive psychosocial interview tool used to evaluate the health and well-being of adolescents, addressing areas such as Home, Education/ Employment, Exercise/Eating, Activities, Drugs/Alcohol, Sexuality, Suicide/Depression, and Safety) for eligible and clinically appropriate students.
- ▲ Referral of students for health services, such as general practitioners or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), as appropriate.
- ▲ ACC minor injury treatments.

Kiri's Kōrero

I have recently returned from a fantastic holiday in Bali with whānau and friends. Travel certainly exposes you to different cultures, traditions and a way of life. There is no place like home (Aotearoa) though, with our special and unique cultural identity.

This feeling was reinforced on the first day back at mahi when the passion of our PHO whānau was reignited with our first He Pounamu (Te Reo Māori session) for 2024.

Our Kaiako talked about values in Te Ao Māori that will be weaved into He Pounamu over the year:

Whanaungatanga (relationships), Manaakitanga (kindness), Whakapapa (Genealogy) and Tuakiritanga (Identity).

Cultural Identity is important for several reasons:

- Sense of belonging.
- Self-understanding – values, beliefs, customs, and traditions that shape an individual's perspective on life.
- Preservation of heritage – passing down of traditions, knowledge, and customs from one generation to another.

- Promotion of diversity. Recognising and respecting cultural identity promotes the idea that diversity is a valuable and enriching aspect of society, it encourages the celebration of difference rather than viewing them as barriers.

We look forward to exploring Whakapapa and Tuakiritanga and sharing our learnings at our next Equity Champions Rōpū.

He tangata kē koutou, he tangata kē mātou, engari i tenei wā, tātou tātou e.

You are diverse, we are diverse, but in the final analysis, we all belong.

Ngā mihi,

Kiri Peita – Director of Māori Health and Wellbeing

A catalyst for change

Atawhai's journey from research to a strong network reshaping the response to family violence



– Wānanga in Whakatāne gathered nearly 40 providers.

In the heart of the Bay of Plenty, a unique project has been paving the way for primary care professionals to respond more effectively to whānau experiencing violence. Stemming from a comprehensive three-year research initiative, the Atawhai Network aims to improve service delivery so families can seek care and support safely. Founded by participants of the study, the now Charitable Trust is led by a dedicated group of primary care providers, including general practitioners, nurses, social workers, and management.

"Atawhai is a unique health care response to family violence evidenced by empirical knowledge of primary care professionals. The research aimed to explore what an effective and sustainable response to family violence looks like for primary care. We found that it is about having a network of trusted relationships between clinicians and community service providers, who share skillsets and information to support safe and relational responses to whānau, while responsive to complex needs over time",

explained Dr Claire Gear, Co-Investigator and Project Lead.

The study united multicultural and multidisciplinary skilled researchers, leaders, specialists, and research participants. The strong Te Tiriti o Waitangi based partnership was reflected in the team, tikanga Māori, conceptual frameworks, research design and methodologies. "We used a



– Atawhai team presented at the National Conference for General Practice 2023, in Auckland.

"Many small changes over time can lead to system change."

– Dr Claire Gear, Co-Investigator and Project Lead



participatory design. That meant that the research participants were supported and encouraged to initiate and lead the work, while the research was happening, hence the creation of the network", described Emma Skellern, research participant and Network Liaison at the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation.

Moving beyond prescriptive family violence responses, Atawhai indicates systemic pathways that can be strengthened to facilitate primary care response to whānau impacted by violence. The initiative calls for explicit recognition of family violence as a key determinant of ill-health within healthcare policy and practice. Additionally, Atawhai advocates for improved connections between medical and community service provision, emphasising the importance of clinical and cultural supervision for healthcare professionals, as well as promoting accessible information and support services.

"We anticipate that as understanding grows, health care service provision will change to better support the health and well-being of whānau seeking care. Atawhai shifts away from standardised quality improvement approaches, at odds with the diversity of primary care and the complexity of family violence, recognising many small changes over time can lead to system change", concluded Dr Gear. ▲

Future directions

As the research funding concluded, Atawhai redirected its focus towards sharing the valuable insights gained throughout its journey. In June 2023, participants collectively decided to establish Atawhai as a Charitable Trust with an executive board, which positions the project as a legal entity capable of seeking external funding to support its vital network and ongoing activities.

As a Charitable Trust, Atawhai is now equipped to extend its impact and further contribute to the prevention of family violence within communities. "As of January 2024, the Atawhai Network has approximately 200 members nationally, centred within the Bay of Plenty. We have translated findings at numerous local, national and international events", said Dr Claire Gear, Co-Investigator and Project Lead.

The impacts of family violence are profound and multi-generational, making

the dissemination of Atawhai's findings crucial for community awareness and education. In November 2023, Atawhai co-hosted 'He Waka Atawhai Tukua' with Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services at Mātaatua Marae, in Whakatāne. "The wānanga welcomed nearly 40 health care and family violence service providers, to strengthen their understanding and provide safe spaces for professionals to kōrero about the challenges of responding to family violence in practice", detailed Dr Gear.

In the future, Atawhai aims to host regular wānanga and peer support hui to provide safe spaces to kōrero about family violence, building confidence and capability in responding to whānau and families seeking care. "We want to develop a sustainable long-term response to family violence", defined Dr Gear. ▲

Research takeaways

BE SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST



- Kōrero about family violence can be many shared moments in time, or wā, within a relationship, underpinned by tika (honesty), pono (truth), and aroha (empathy).
- We do not have to 'fix the problem' but be someone whānau can trust to walk alongside supporting opportunities for change.
- Care is taken so any kōrero is responsive to, and safe for, whānau.

COLLABORATE AND CONNECT



- Clinical and community services can work better together. Clinicians can struggle to know who to refer to and community services rely on referrals to provide help.
- Atawhai is growing meaningful connections between professionals to support family violence responsiveness.
- Collectively, accountability to whānau can be shared.

WHO YOU ARE MATTERS



- Family violence is deeply rooted in societal trauma.
- Taking time to reflect on how your worldview influences your practice is critical. Understanding local history, whenua, whakapapa and the impacts of colonisation and racism can transform the way you practice.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO



- Knowing what to do, or how to help can be hard. We cannot stop what has happened or know what will happen next.
- It is important to take time to care for ourselves so we may be helpful to others.
- Atawhai is advocating for formal supervision and peer support to protect our health and wellbeing.

A call to action



– Sign up for the Atawhai newsletter at www.atawhaitia.co.nz.

Atawhai Network connects people, organisations, information, and tools to safely journey with whānau and families in their experience of family violence. Members gain confidence in knowing what to do and how to help, have access to trusted local referral services and be able to share challenges with like-minded people.

Atawhai invites professionals, organisations, community service providers, and other stakeholders to participate. The simplest way to do so is

to sign up for their newsletter at www.atawhaitia.co.nz.

Professionals can also attend wānanga and peer support hui; these events are published on their website. Organisations interested in collaborating with Atawhai are also welcome to get in touch.

Atawhai's journey is not just a research project; it's a call to action to support primary care providers in responding to family violence through informed policy and practice. ▲

Telehealth becomes a key partner to general practice service delivery

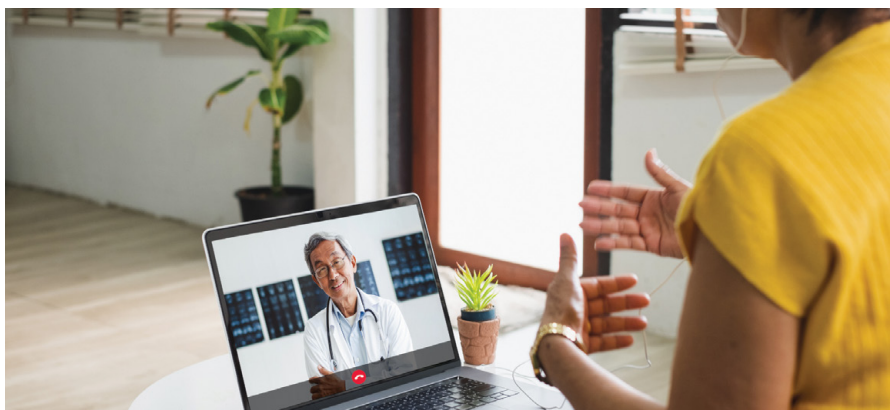
A collaboration, initiated in August 2023 between Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) and Practice Plus, is shaping the telehealth scene in the region, intending to increase access options for primary care. With over 75% of practices within the WBOP PHO network actively participating, Practice Plus is becoming a key alternative for patients and a strategic partner for medical practices.

Practice Plus operates as a same-day virtual clinician appointment platform, available also after-hours, during weekends, and on public holidays. The service poses as a practice ally to serve the community, especially when centre is closed, and the patient needs immediate attention. "Outside business hours, patients can make direct bookings to access a virtual consult as an alternative to Accident and HealthCare on 2nd Avenue, in Tauranga", explains Phil Back, General Manager of Network Services at WBOP PHO.

Practice Plus acts as an extension of the general practice network, providing patients an alternative option when they cannot get into their practice of enrolment. "During business hours, a medical centre that is unable to meet the demand of their enrolled population can also offer a virtual consult", elaborates Back.

The holiday break observed a surge in demand. Practice Plus supported 48 patients in the Western Bay of Plenty between 23 December and 7 January, when general practices have limited accessibility and high demand. Nationwide, more than 1,500 patients had virtual consultations through the service, the busiest period so far since its launch in 2022. The busiest day was 29 December, when 120 patients had appointments, with a 90% resolution rate.

"I'm proud of the hard work of our doctors over the festive period, and our teams that supported us in the background. We will continue to improve and expand our service to support our communities well into the future and I'm excited to see this grow", declared Jess White, General Manager at Practice Plus.



Locum and inbox support

An additional support function is the use of Practice Plus to assist with the clinical team's annual leave covers and inbox management. The service can provide a dedicated locum to seamlessly integrate into the GP's team, accessing the patient management system and ensuring continued care. ▲



▲ WHAT IS PRACTICE PLUS

It's a same-day, after-hours virtual healthcare partner, working together with our GP network. It provides medical advice to repeat prescriptions and health certificates.



▲ OPERATING HOURS:

Weekdays: 8am – 10 pm
Weekends and Public Holidays: 8am to 8pm.



▲ HOW IT WORKS

Register – The patient goes through a quick registration process. This is not an enrolment. They will remain enrolled on their original practice. Practice Plus does not enrol patients.

Book – Choose a preferred option: wait in the queue or book an appointment.

Payment – Pre-pay for the appointment. The patient is charged only after the consultation.

Consultation – Practice Plus sends a link 15 minutes before the clinician is ready.



▲ AFTER THE CONSULTATION

Prescriptions are emailed straight to the preferred pharmacy. Patient notes are shared with their enrolled GP upon consent from the patient.

If further intervention is needed, patients are referred to the enrolled general practice, alternative provider, or emergency services.



▲ HOW TO BOOK

Practices can display a link on their website or patients can access www.practiceplus.nz.

A day to engage whānau in health and wellness

The Waipū Hauora Whānau Day, held in December, was a vibrant celebration of whanaungatanga that captivated attendees throughout the entire day. The event offered a diverse range of activities, including health checkups, engaging Mahi toi (arts and crafts), kai stalls, games, and entertainment, providing a dynamic platform for families to connect and participate.

The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) was present with the smokefree programme, Health Coaches and Health Improvement Practitioners promoting health, wellness and lifestyle services. The team found a

creative way to introduce the Hāpaianga quit smoking service:

“Our display, which showed \$35 worth of groceries – the equivalent of a \$35 packet of smokes worked as a great conversation starter. People could then go into the draw to win the groceries along with a supermarket voucher”, explained Emma Walker, the WBOP PHO Smoke-Free Practitioner.

Among the highlights of the day was the presence of Poutiri Trust’s Mobile Pahi, a bustling hub that offered health checkups and garnered enthusiastic participation from the community. Several health providers also played a



crucial role by disseminating valuable information and resources aimed at enhancing overall health and well-being.

“The annual Waipū Whānau Day has become a tradition, and we welcome the opportunity to be involved in this positive interactive day. Ngā mihi nui”, said Tiana Bennett, Health Promotion Coordinator at WBOP PHO. ▲

Empowering wahine around the globe



The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (WBOP PHO) collected 181 bras for Project Uplift – a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting women’s confidence, comfort and dignity across the Pacific and South-East Asia, through bra donations.

The internal campaign happened over a week last December and was a pilot for future campaigns. “We aim to collect bras at various moments across the coming year and in parallel to national or local campaigns such as the Big Latch On in April and Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. We hope to bring our practice network in on the fun too” explained Patrizia Krieser, Marketing Coordinator at WBOP PHO.

If you wish to donate directly, however, here is a list of drop-off locations:

- **Tauranga** – Breast Cancer Support, 53 Fraser Street
- **Tauriko** – Metalcraft Roofing, 42 Poturi St – Melia Blackwood
- **Pāpāmoa** – 3/18 The Glade – Anita O’Connor, 021 1363377
- **Te Puna** – Kiwispan, 1 Loop Road – Jill Astill, 021 366047
- **Katikati** – 215 Tanners Point Road – Melia Blackwood, 027 9333079

Why Donate Bras?

For many women, a bra is more than just an undergarment – it represents dignity, comfort, and confidence. From supporting breastfeeding mothers to aiding those who have undergone mastectomies, bras play a crucial role in women’s lives. In humid climates, bras also help prevent rashes and infections by allowing air circulation.

About Project Uplift. Since 2005, Project Uplift has sent over two million bras to countries such as Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Philippines, Bali, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Botswana, Uganda and Pakistan, the outback of Australia and to projects and schools in need in New Zealand.

What you can donate

Bras of all sizes, including sports bras, mastectomy bras, nursing bras, and swimwear. Broken bras are also welcome (used for repair or to create extenders).

LEARN MORE AT:

www.projectuplift.org.nz. ▲

Upcoming Events

March

- 3 World Hearing Day
- 9 World Kidney Day
- 4 HPV Awareness Day
- 8 International Women’s Day
- 11 Relay for Life – Te Ara Toiora
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

April

- 2 World Autism Awareness Day
- 7 World Health Day
- 14 Big Latch On

There are too many events to list, so this list is not comprehensive.

Graeme Elvin appointed as Co-Chair of WBOP PHO



Graeme Elvin (Ngāti Ranginui) has stepped into the role of co-chair of Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation, succeeding Paora Stanley (Ngāi Te Rangi), whose term has ended. While assuming this post for the first time, he brings over seven years of invaluable experience as a board member, showcasing his commitment to improving equity and health outcomes for the community.

"It is an honour to be vested with the role as co-chair, particularly to represent the Iwi parties in the Joint Venture that the PHO is based on and, therefore, the health needs of the local Māori population. At the same time, the role also demands that, subject to that Iwi obligation, the best interests of the PHO remain a priority", stated Graeme.

A respected lawyer and current partner of Tompkins Wake, Graeme has devoted his career to assisting clients with legal and business needs. He brings to the role a unique approach to problem-solving, a reputation for implementing workable solutions and a high level of strategic planning.

Graeme's leadership extends beyond the legal realm into governance, having held positions as Director and Chairman of the Chiefs Limited (Chiefs Super 15 Rugby franchise), Director and Chairman of Bay Leisure & Events Limited (now Bay Venues), and Director of Northern Districts Cricket. A Chartered Member of the Institute of Directors and a board member of various non-profit organisations, in addition to the WBOP PHO. His journey highlights his strategic leadership and unwavering dedication to the communities he serves.

"The responses to COVID-19 are hopefully behind us, and it is now time to focus on proactive rather than reactive health issues. Māori and general population health have not improved. The PHO has a clear strategic plan that I would like us to refocus on. Politics and

"The PHO has over 20 years of credibility through various iterations of central government. I would like to see the PHO become much more active in the health advocacy space, demanding more equitable and efficient use of our tax dollars."

— Graeme Elvin, Co-Chair

health are inexorably linked and that has not, in my opinion, always been in the best interest of our population. The PHO has over 20 years of credibility through various iterations of central government. I would like to see the PHO become much more active in the health advocacy space, demanding more equitable and efficient use of our tax dollars", Graeme shared.

As a partnership Joint Venture, the WBOP PHO board follows a co-governance model, with one co-chair currently representing Western Bay of Plenty Primary Care Providers Incorporated, held by Dr. Dan Macintosh. The second co-chair represents Tauranga Moana Iwi, Ngāi Te Rangi and Ngāti Ranginui. Each co-chair serves a two-year term. ▲

New faces in the whare



— Karine Valverde

Primary Mental Health Administrator

"I like to dip fries in ice cream."



— Dee Andersen

Network Support Administrator

"I absolutely do not like photos. So, meet the 5th addition to our family: Snoop-Doug. My hair is a lot curlier than his."



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