

# Te Rerenga

News from the Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation



WBOP PHO

Western Bay of Plenty  
Primary Health Organisation

Tungia te Ururua, kia tupu  
Whakaritorito te tupu  
O te harakeke



## Stories from behind the surgery door

Dr Andrew Corin from The Doctors Tauranga has just had his book of short stories, *This Old Stick*, named by the Next Generation Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group as one of the best indie books of 2020. Read more about his work on page 3.

## Health and Disability System Review

The long-awaited Health and Disability System Review, conducted by Heather Simpson, was announced in June, and recommended “it no longer be required” for DHBs to contract PHOs for primary healthcare services.

Other key recommendations in the review include the establishment of a Māori Health Authority, and a new health entity called Health NZ to ensure consistent operational policy and lead the delivery of health and disability services across the country. The Ministry of Health would retain responsibility as the chief steward of the health and disability system.

It was also recommended that DHBs be reduced from 20 to between eight and 12 and re-focussed to be fully accountable for achieving equitable health outcomes for their population, including ensuring Tier 1 services are planned and delivered appropriately for their communities.

WBOP PHO chief executive Lindsey Webber says the PHO is looking at what the review recommendations will mean for the organisation.

“Consideration of the proposed changes will take time and we don’t yet know which of the recommendations will be adopted so we will continue to work collaboratively with our partners in the community as usual. A real positive is the greater emphasis on population health and its role in keeping people healthy – something as a network we are fully committed to.

“There will be opportunities and challenges, but it is reassuring to see the review supports our priorities of achieving equity in health outcomes for Māori, providing quality healthcare for all our communities, and ensuring we are bringing everyone on the journey together.”

The report findings can be viewed online: [systemreview.health.govt.nz](https://systemreview.health.govt.nz).

[wboppho.org.nz](https://wboppho.org.nz)



# Embracing technology in a COVID-19 world

Going into COVID-19 lockdown meant a new way of working for most of us. The Zoom hui, affectionately known as the Zui, became the norm. In this article we look at how a variety of people throughout our PHO network embraced this virtual world.

## GPs offer patients virtual consults

When COVID-19 struck in March, GPs were required to start offering patients virtual consults – both phone and video – almost overnight. For many GPs, it was the first time consults had been offered this way.



Dr James Peckett

Dr James Peckett from Mount Medical Centre says the rapid move to virtual consults was “a relief” as it meant practices were less vulnerable.

“It was hard to keep people away from the clinic who didn’t tell us they were sick before coming in. We didn’t know what COVID-19 would bring, so it was good to have the backing to move to virtual consults.”

He says the transition to virtual consults was relatively simple, with just a few technical difficulties using video for some patients.

“Some loved the convenience and accessibility of it. People are busy and we are very much an 8am to 5pm business. It’s a real investment of time for people to come in to see us.

“People have said ‘why haven’t you done this before?’ and ‘this is the only way we want to see you again’, but others don’t like it because it’s not very personal.”

Mount Medical Centre is now offering patients the option of a virtual or an in-clinic consult, with about 20 per cent choosing the virtual (predominantly phone) option.

While James acknowledges the value of seeing patients in person, he is enjoying offering virtual consults.

“I love it. Because people don’t have the time investment of coming in, they feel they can access the service for just one concern at a time. And if they do have more than one concern it’s much easier to redirect to another time.”

One of the challenges GPs are facing, says James, is the public perception that a virtual consult shouldn’t cost as much as an in-clinic consult.

“There is a perception there is reduced value in a virtual consult,” says James. “Because it can be a different consultation and there is less of an investment in time, they don’t feel it should cost as much, even though they get the same outcome.”

## Social media used to engage rangatahi

Spotify, Facebook and Instagram, as well as online video sessions, were used to deliver Ngāi Te Rangī’s Koi Ora programme over the recent school holidays.

Koi Ora has an emphasis on health promotion and education for rangatahi (youth) aged 10-15 years and was launched in January 2018 with support from WBOP PHO. It has been developed in relation to Te Ao Māori health practices and principles, which aim to enhance Māori wellbeing/hauora.



Koi Ora Coordinator Carley Ririnui-Hennings (Ngāi Te Rangī, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Awa, Te Arawa, Ngāti Pikiao, Tūhoe, Ngāti Whakaue) and Te Ohu Rangatahi Manager Mel Bennett (Ngāi Te Rangī, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Raukawa).

The programme is usually delivered kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) during the school holidays, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Rū Crew – a COVID-19 response initiative – was developed to introduce online facilitation and participation via social media platforms and video sessions.

Te Ohu Rangatahi Manager Mel Bennett says for rangatahi, the transfer of traditional and cultural knowledge forms the basis for encouraging good nutrition, regular physical exercise, and an enriched cultural connectedness.

“Since the Level 1 announcement we have been busy organising new rangatahi initiatives, including travelling to tertiary Institutions and kura. Te Ohu Rangatahi is proud to collaborate with the PHO on this project and provide opportunities for rangatahi, our future leaders.”

## Self-management groups go online

The PHO’s lifestyle wellness and diabetes self-management groups were unable to go ahead during the COVID-19 lockdown so Level 3 saw a move to offering the sessions online via Zoom.

The courses were compressed into hour-long sessions over four weeks and have been such a hit with patients that they will continue to be offered as an online option, as well as continuing in person.

The lifestyle wellness course covers exercise, stress and sleep, mindful eating, and nutrition.

Clinical exercise physiologist Caitlin Milne says the online option worked well. “The first one is always a bit awkward but people were still interacting like they would in person.”

“Some people said they probably wouldn’t have come in person due to the travel and logistics so the Zoom option helped reduce those barriers. Others felt it was a lot less nerve-racking than in person.”

There were also online self-management courses for people with type 2 diabetes which covered nutrition and exercise with Caitlin, medication with Medwise pharmacist

Carolyn Woolerton and advice from diabetes nurse specialist Fleur Brett and diabetes educator Brenda Newman.

Patients can self-refer to the groups or be referred by their GP (via BPAC), or organisations such as the Tauranga Sleep Clinic, Tauranga Eye Specialists, Tauranga Hospital, and the Green Prescription programme via Sport Bay of Plenty.

### PHO offers first webinars

WBOP PHO also took its Continuing Medical Information (CME) sessions online during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Philippa Jones, Director of Nursing and Workforce Development, says the hastily-organised webinars were a first for the organisation and were well-received.

"We take our responsibility to provide ongoing education for local doctors and nurses really seriously so we decided to offer webinars.



"It was surprisingly easy. People have reported having no problems getting on and we had similar numbers attending as we would in person."

General Practices have indicated they still want in-person sessions, but many have also requested that they continue online as well.

"Going forward, the rest of the programmes will be delivered in person but with a webinar option so people can choose to attend in person or participate from home. We record the webinars so we may also send them out to our partners across the Midland region to broaden our networks," says Philippa.

Ironically, the first webinar was about how to use telehealth.

"We had the benefit of having Dr Marshall Hollister-Jones, a user of Doxy.me software, and our Chief Information Officer, Grant Ardern, advising practices on what they needed to set up and use telehealth. It was very timely," says Philippa.

## Celebrating our elderly in stories

**Older people hold a special place in the heart of Tauranga GP Dr Andrew Corin – so much so that he wrote a book of short stories about them which has been named by the Next Generation Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group as one of the best indie books of 2020.**

Andrew self-published *This Old Stick* in 2019 as a reminder of the gifts and precious treasure the elderly bring to our community.

"I've always loved writing because it's about storytelling. As a GP, a huge part of my job is encouraging people to tell stories framed around their health and social situation. We're trained in medicine that the history of an illness is the most important part. The examination and investigations are there to confirm what the history tells you.

"Encouraging people to tell a story about their illness is crucial, so for me, it was a natural progression to want to put some of these stories down."

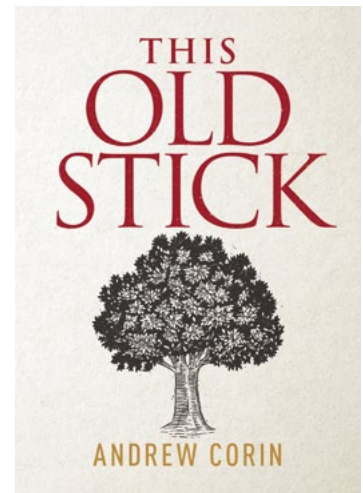
The characters in Andrew's book – including the GP at the centre of the stories – are fictional but draw on some of the character traits of patients he has treated over the past 22 years.

"Nobody could identify themselves in any of the stories, but I can read them and think of the people I was writing about."

Andrew describes the characters as "fairly ordinary, but completely relatable".

"The deeper mission is to encourage people to make better connections with the elderly people around them because they are interesting and have wisdom and experience to share."

Andrew has gone a step further and is



now interviewing elderly people for a series of podcasts hosted on his website.

In 2018 Andrew surveyed his patients on what a good day looked like for them. His research formed the basis of a paper published in the RNZCGP journal, 'Being well and wellbeing: a better understanding of patient priorities in patient care'.

He presented the paper at the national GP conference last year and has been invited to speak at the World Family Doctors (WONCA) Asia Pacific regional conference later this year.

"It turns things around and makes the patient the most important person in the consultation. Of course they should be, but the way that medicine has moved over many years has seen the doctor with the power and the patient as a passive contributor. That's not how it should be.

"I believe in the concept of concordance where the doctor and patient are equal partners. Let's understand each other and talk about an outcome that suits both of us."

This *Old Stick* is available from [www.drcorin.nz](http://www.drcorin.nz), Books A Plenty or Paper Plus.



During March-May 2020 in Bay of Plenty

**13,220** patients seen in CBACs

**10,080** patients swabbed for COVID-19



# Introducing Ellen Walker

Whakatāne's Ellen Walker could be forgiven for never wanting to do another university paper again after completing her Master of Nursing and nurse practitioner training, but her "enquiring mind" wasn't happy to leave it at that.

A nurse practitioner at The Doctors Total Health and The Doctors Kopeopeo, Ellen is now completing her post-graduate diploma in clinical education. It is partly her way of paying it forward after being clinically supervised by Opotiki GP Dr Jo Scott-Jones during her nurse practitioner training.

"His clinical supervision was exceptional – he's a very good teacher and his practice is very suited to learning. I want to support the good work of nurses who are caring for people living with chronic conditions, so I aim to offer the same emphasis on good clinical supervision and collaborative care."

Ellen grew up in Whakatāne and became a registered nurse in 2004. After working in oncology and diabetes care in Auckland and Queensland she returned to her home town 10 years later to work in primary care.

"As a result of my experience with chronic conditions I became frustrated that I couldn't do a lot – I felt like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. I wanted to work in primary care where I felt I was going to get more job satisfaction."



Nurse practitioner Ellen Walker

While her role as nurse practitioner is a demanding one, it is important to Ellen to continue with professional development and she encourages others to do the same.

"I did my first paper in oncology in 2007 in response to the patients in front of me. I just needed to know more, and, as with primary care, and now clinical supervision, I feel like I still do."

## Life in quarantine

**WBOP PHO chief executive Lindsey Webber recently spent two weeks in quarantine after returning to New Zealand from the United Kingdom.**

Remember Wilson the volleyball from the Tom Hanks film Castaway? Well, for Lindsey her quarantine companion was Derek the Prawn – for a few days anyway before he started to smell!

"It was my stir-crazy moment," she laughs.

Lindsey travelled to the UK in mid-April after her elderly mother contracted COVID-19. Once her mother was released from hospital Lindsey nursed her back to health at her retirement village.

Unfortunately Lindsey's father passed away shortly afterwards. She was unable to

visit him in his rest home, but was grateful to be there for his funeral.

Lindsey returned to New Zealand in early June and went into managed isolation. On day three she showed symptoms of COVID-19 and was moved into quarantine.

She used the time to catch up on work, reconnect with colleagues, and reflect on the "strange social experiment" that COVID-19 presented.

"I found having to stay away from people very hard. It was easy to get lost in your thoughts. I had to practice mindfulness and pace myself."

Lindsey says her time in quarantine allowed her to reflect on how well everybody in the PHO – including GPs and Iwi partners – pulled together during the lockdown.

"I was really impressed with the can-do attitude. It's a testament to the good relationships we have developed across our networks."

## IN BRIEF

### Matariki – celebrating the Māori New Year

**Matariki is the Māori name for the cluster of stars also known as the Pleiades. It rises in mid-winter and for many Māori, it heralds the start of a new year. Matariki literally means the 'eyes of god' (mata ariki) or 'little eyes' (mata riki).**

Some people think of Matariki as a mother star with six daughters, and it is often referred to as the Seven Sisters. Others think that Matariki are the 'eyes of the god'. When Ranginui, the sky father, and Papatūānuku, the earth mother, were separated by their children the god of wind, Tāwhirimātea, became angry, tearing out his eyes and hurling them into the heavens.

Matariki appears in the eastern sky sometime around the shortest day of the year and is thought to determine how successful the harvest crop will be in the coming season. The brighter the stars, the more productive the crop will be.

In 2020, Matariki will begin on 13 July.

Matariki is a time to come together as a united community to celebrate new beginnings. It is a celebration of people, culture, language, spirituality and history.

## Ngā Kete on its way

**WBOP PHO's new intranet is on its way.**

The name Ngā Kete was chosen by staff following a naming competition, won by General Manager, Practice Services, Phil Back.

Ngā Kete means baskets of information and will give staff a place to find information relevant to their work, collaborate, and share information.

Staff will be able to access the information from the workplace or via the internet, and via a variety of devices. It is hoped the ability for staff to collaborate and share documents within teams will reduce email traffic and the time taken to find information.

Ngā Kete is expected to be launched in late July.