

Ruruku – Issue 24

25 January 2024

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Message from the Chief Executives

Ngā mihi o te tau hou,

Welcome to 2024 and the first issue of *Ruruku* for the year.

Firstly, we want to acknowledge everyone who worked health over the holiday season, providing vital services for New Zealanders around the motu. We sincerely thank you for your efforts and sacrifices.

For those who were able to take some time with whānau and friends during the break, we hope you enjoyed your own celebrations and feel ready and refreshed for the important work ahead.

At the end of last year, Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand and Te Aka Whai Ora – Māori Health Authority supported the new government to deliver on a number of initiatives in its 100 Day Plan.

Minister Reti announced a boost to Emergency Department security over summer, with an additional 200 security staff (93 FTEs) put into 32 emergency departments around the country. Initial feedback and early data show a marked drop in the number of reported incidents over the period. This was an interim measure while a wider 'workplace aggression prevention' programme is rolled out.

More 100 Day Plan initiatives will be discussed in cabinet throughout early 2024 including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a third medical school, increasing Breast Screening and introducing legislation to disestablish Te Aka Whai Ora.

While the hospital admission rates for COVID-19 are currently elevated, they have fallen since the most recent peak, which occurred just prior to Christmas. With COVID-19 still very much a significant risk in our communities, we remind you all to take care of yourselves and your whānau.

We look forward to seeing you at our next hui and will continue to keep in touch through our Ruruku and hui throughout 2024.

**Ka nui ngā mihi,
Margie and Riana**

Stakeholder virtual hui 30 January, 3.30pm



We are excited about our first stakeholder virtual hui for the year and invite you to join us on **30 January, 3.30-4.15pm.**

We will discuss how **Data & Digital** is powering - and empowering - the future of healthcare. Technology has become even more critical in the context of clinical workforce constraints and evolving consumer needs & preferences.

Join us in this session where we will outline how we're moving forward from a Data & Digital standpoint to enable Pae Ora. This includes opening up new ways of working with the wider sector to co-create the future of care for New Zealanders.

You'll have the opportunity to post questions via the event link and there will be a focused question and answer session in the second half of the hui.

If you would like to register or receive an invitation for this and future events, click here: [Invitation](#).

To check out the previous hui, including responses to questions and feedback, you can access the recordings [Te Whatu Ora](#) and [Te Aka Whai Ora](#).

2024 Stakeholder virtual hui schedule

Moving forward, we will send calendar invitations and email reminders for stakeholder hui.

In the meantime, if you would like to hold these dates in advance, the 2024 schedule is shown below:

2024 Stakeholder hui dates & times	
Tuesday 30 January	3.30 - 4.15pm
Wednesday 6 March	9.00 - 9.45am
Wednesday 10 April	9.00 - 9.45am
Tuesday 7 May	3.00 - 3.45pm
Thursday 6 June	9.00 - 9.45am
Tuesday 2 July	3.00 - 3.45pm
Thursday 8 August	1.00 - 1.45pm
Thursday 5 September	9.00 - 9.45am
Thursday 3 October	3.00 - 3.45pm
Thursday 7 November	9.00 - 9.45am
Wednesday 4 December	9.00 - 9.45am

Invitation to attend Te Whatu Ora Board meeting 26 January, 9.30am

The Board of Te Whatu Ora is meeting on Friday 26 January at 9.30am.

There is an open board session at the beginning of the meeting where you are welcome to attend as an observer from 9.30-10.00am.

Click link to attend: [Zoom link for open Board meeting 26 January 2024](#).

For more information and updates from the Board meetings, click [here](#).



Inaugural annual report published on 5 December 2023



As you may know, it's a requirement for Te Whatu Ora to provide an Annual Report each year.

On 5 December 2023, Te Whatu Ora published their inaugural annual report, covering the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

To read the report click [here](#).

Training in mental health and addiction on the rise



Enrolments for the New Entry to Specialist Practice (NESP) programme are higher than ever.

The programme, which trains nursing and Allied Health graduates to specialise in mental health and addiction, is delivered through Te Pou, the national workforce centre for mental health, addiction and disability in New Zealand.

In 2023, 303 nurses and 87 allied health workers – those working in occupational therapy and social work – enrolled in NESP programmes through Te Pou. With 286 nurses and 78 allied health staff signed up for 2024, we are on track to see even bigger numbers than 2023 as more graduates complete their studies and come on board in the second half of the year.

Jo Chiplin, Te Whatu Ora Mental Health and Addiction Group Manager, says the figures are a positive sign the mental health and addiction workforce continues to grow in New Zealand.

“We know overall workforce shortages are the biggest challenge facing the mental health and addiction system, but we are taking significant strides to help fix this. There has never been more support offered in as many locations as there is today,” says Jo Chiplin.

Other workforce initiatives include funding three times the amount of clinical psychology internships within mental health and addiction services, establishing six new clinical psychology intern hubs to grow the workforce and improve the intern experience, and increasing the funding each intern gets to more than \$66,000 a year in July 2024.

Te Pou website and more information about NESP [click here](#).

Expanded Pharmacist prescribing programme



Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand is partnering with Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland and Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtākou University of Otago to fund more places across both schools' Pharmacist Prescribing programmes from 2024 to 2026.

The funding injection of almost \$5 million covers study fees, travel grants and Designated Medical Practitioner support so participants can complete the Postgraduate Certificate

in Clinical Pharmacy in Prescribing.

The aim of the part-time postgraduate programmes is to increase the number of qualified trained professionals able to prescribe for patients under their care. It will specifically support and target qualified Māori, Pacific, and rural candidates as well as other demographics.

John Snook, Director Workforce Development and Planning, said "One key initiative we've undertaken is to expand and fund training pathways for 60 additional pharmacy prescribers per year across the motu," "Pharmacist prescribers have specialised knowledge about medicines and by upskilling our pharmacists, our communities benefit by having improved access to care, both to medicines, treatment plans and education about the best way to manage their medicines. It also frees up other practitioners to help more patients, due to the collaborative nature of the work with other healthcare professionals.

For more information on what a pharmacy prescriber can do click [here](#).

Click the University website links for more information on the courses:

- [Otago.ac.nz](https://otago.ac.nz)
- [Auckland.ac.nz](https://auckland.ac.nz)

Bowel cancer screening programme celebrates one million returned kits



The National Bowel Screening Programme has recently celebrated one million test kits being completed and returned for testing. The programme started in 2017, and was fully rolled out across the country by June 2022.

"Reaching the milestone of one million returned bowel screening test kits is testament to our commitment to provide accessible, effective screening, but we aren't stopping there, bowel screening clinical lead Dr Susan Parry says. "Our programme continues to innovate, and we are increasing our focus over the coming year on community events and gatherings to provide additional opportunities for people to learn about bowel screening and request kits."

Across Aotearoa New Zealand the age range of eligibility is 60–74, however, in some regions, free bowel screening has been made available to Māori and Pacific people from the age of 50–74 through the age extension initiative. To date, the lower starting age has been rolled out in Te Whatu Ora Waikato, Tairāwhiti (Gisborne) and Te Pae Hauora o Ruahine o Tararua (Mid-Central). The starting age is lower for these populations because a higher proportion of bowel cancer occurs in Māori and Pacific people before reaching 60, compared with others.

Selah Hart, Maiaka Hāpori Deputy Chief Executive Public and Population Health, Te Aka Whai Ora, says it is vital that we continue to remove barriers for eligible whānau to access the programme.

“It’s encouraging to see over 70,000 eligible Māori have completed the test since the programme started,” she said. “We’re continuing to work with our hauora Māori partners across the motu who support eligible whānau to screen so that we can decrease the risk of late diagnosis.”

Read more [here](#).

Website: [Time to Screen](#)

Phone: 0800 924 432

Rural telehealth service off to a good start



The new rural telehealth service provided by Ka Ora supported 3,973 patients over the holiday period 22 December – 7 January. Bringing together the combined resources of Practice Plus, Reach Aotearoa and Emergency Consult, Ka Ora offers out of hours telehealth services to people living and visiting rural areas that may not have easy access to primary healthcare outside of regular clinic hours.

Of the total consults, 1,702 were resolved with advice from the kaiāwhina, with a further 1,298 patients triaged by the nurses and issues resolved. These appointments were free for the patients. A further 800

received an appointment with a General Practitioner or Senior Nurse Practitioner, 157 triaged by a nurse from Emergency Consult overnight and 16 received an appointment from an emergency medicine doctor.

Dr Sarah Clarke, Te Whatu Ora's National Clinical Director, Primary and Community Care, said it's promising to see such good uptake of the service by those living in and visiting rural areas in just a matter of weeks: "This service is key tool we are employing to improve equitable access to healthcare for all, no matter where we live and what time of year it is."

Read more [here](#).

Website: [Ka Ora Telecare](#)

Phone: 0800 2 KA ORA (0800 252 672)

MidCentral's first interventional cardiac catheterisation laboratory



Palmerston North Regional Hospital's brand new interventional cardiac catheterisation laboratory (cath lab) is now open.

The new cath lab is part of Central Region's wider cardiac plan to increase capacity and reduce pressure on the regional service provided by Wellington Regional Hospital.

Lyn Horgan, Operations Executive says, "More capacity is needed as demand is increasing. Having a cath lab in provincial centres like Palmerston North means it is closer to where people live, reducing the need for patients to travel far from home."

The cath lab also frees up other services and diagnostic equipment for patients. Pacemaker insertions have previously been completed in the general theatre suite, and angiograms at the medical imaging service. Now, both of these can be completed in the cath lab.

The main equipment, costing around \$1.7m, was delivered on site in October 2023. The cath lab comprises a large room, and includes control and computer rooms alongside, together with a small storage area and scrub bay for the interventional cardiology team. It has specialist imaging systems to view coronary arteries and the cardiac structure, as well as advanced haemodynamic monitoring systems to monitor patients.

Read more [here](#).

National Clinical Networks leaders announced

The National Clinical Networks programme, tasked with reducing variation in health outcomes for New Zealanders, has taken another major step with the announcement of leadership for four new Networks.

The joint Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora appointments of experts to lead the Critical Care, Eye Health, Radiology and Infection Services National Clinical Networks builds on the Stroke, Cardiac, Trauma and Renal Networks which were established late last year.

The new National Clinical Network appointees are:

Critical Care:	Nayda Heays, Hawke's Bay and Alex Psirides, Wellington
Eye Health:	Alistair Papali'i-Curtin, Wellington and Sarah Welch, Auckland
Infection Services*:	Carolyn Clissold, Wellington
Radiology*:	Sharyn MacDonald, Christchurch

[Read their bios here.](#)

Please note: *Expressions of interest remain open for a second co-lead for both Radiology and Infection Services and will be announced when appointments are confirmed.

Read more about the [National Clinical Networks](#).

Contact us:

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