

From the Chair



At our last Board meeting, Chief Executive Graham Dyer and I signed a certificate pledging Hutt Valley DHB's support for a new, highly visible national patient safety campaign.

The 'Open for Better Care' campaign is aimed at saving lives and reducing harm in hospitals nationwide.

It challenges health care workers to be open to acknowledging mistakes and learning from them, open to working closely with patients and consumers, and open to change, improvement and innovation. The campaign focuses on falls, surgery, healthcare-associated infections and medication safety - the four key areas where evidence shows it's possible to reduce patient harm.

Calling all Hutt Valley Sri Lankans

It is not well known that Indo-Asian people have an elevated risk of cardiovascular disease.

Indo-Asian peoples include Indian, Fijian Indian, Afghani, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, Tibetan as well as Sri Lankans.

Indo-Asian people (males 35 and over/females 45 and over) who are patients in a Te Awakairangi practice in the Hutt Valley are eligible for a free cardiovascular risk assessment and education session once every five years.

Dr Kalupahana from Avalon Medical Centre strongly advocates these risk assessments for Sri Lankan people in the Hutt Valley. "It is a quick and painless assessment that could save your life"

For those not eligible for a free assessment a CVDRA may be the best investment you can make. A simple cardiovascular risk assessment is like life insurance although it could save your life.

NOT AN EMERGENCY? Call your GP for advice. Even if they're closed you'll be put through to a helpline. Or call Healthline on 0800 611 611

After Hours Medical Centre

5.30pm–11pm weekdays

8am–11pm weekends and public holidays



Upper Hutt Health Centre
after hours clinic
5pm–8am weekdays
9am –1pm & 2pm–6pm
weekends

Our first priority is a focus on falls, with a new alert system in place at Hutt Hospital and staff demonstrating a real commitment to screening patients at risk of falls. As a Board, we'll be keeping a close eye on the number of falls occurring and expect to see a decrease as the range of falls-reduction initiatives are put in place. You can find out more about reducing falls risk on the Health Quality and Safety Commission website www.open.hqsc.govt.nz.

Quality has been a particular focus this month in the DHB, with a 3 day full compliance audit undertaken by 8 external auditors. While we are awaiting the formal report, the informal feedback has been very positive on most counts with staff commended on their follow-up of recommendations from the previous audit. There were no standards 'not achieved' and excellent discussion about progressing those 'partially achieved'.

The Lead Auditor commended staff for consistently meeting the standards in a climate of significant change. Particular praise was given for the Operations Centre – a new development where

real-time information about hospital occupancy, staff workloads, theatre and clinic throughput is providing 'really good information that was well presented and well used.' She also praised staff for the development of good indicators and dashboards to guide decision making at many levels.

Auditors also commented on the cumulative culture of making small changes that made a difference for patients. They enjoyed visiting wards with 'good teamwork and good leadership, where leaders were visible and available, and influencing delivery of care.'

We continue to strive to improve our services so it is great to have a positive audit and know that we are making good progress.

As always, if you wish to comment on these or any other issues, you can write to me or email feedback@huttvalleydhb.org.nz

Best wishes for a healthy winter.

Virginia Hope

Virginia Hope

Chair, Hutt Valley and Capital & Coast DHBs

Are you eligible for a free heart check?

Many people in the Hutt Valley may not realise they are eligible for a free heart check at their doctors surgery.

The Hutt Valley has one of the lowest rates of cardiovascular risk assessment in the country and Te Awakairangi are asking everyone in the Hutt to help turn this around. Whether its going to get your own heart checked or encouraging someone you know or live with to get their heart checked your help is required to make our community healthier. You only have everything to gain from getting your heart checked. Even if your risk is found to be high simple changes to diet and exercise or stopping smoking can make dramatic reductions to your level of risk.

The New Zealand Primary Care Guidelines say that all males over 45 and all females over 45 should get their heart checked every 5 years.

Key cardio facts:

- Cardiovascular disease (heart, stroke and blood vessel disease) is still the leading cause of death in New Zealand, accounting for 40% of deaths annually.
- Every 90 minutes a New Zealander dies from coronary heart disease
- Many of these deaths are premature and preventable.

Criteria for free heart checks in Hutt Valley:
Males 35 and over who are of Maori, Pacific or Indian Sub Continent ethnicity or live in a quintile 5 area.

Females 45 and over who are of Maori, Pacific or Indian Sub-Continent ethnicity or live in a quintile 5 area.

Meningococcal disease - do you know what symptoms to watch for?

Meningococcal disease can occur at any time during the year but it is most common in winter and spring. Babies, children under 5 years, teenagers and young adults are at greatest risk.

Meningococcal disease may start like the 'flu, but the person can become worse very quickly. Symptoms and signs in children and adults can include high temperature, headache, neck stiffness, muscle and joint pain, skin rash, vomiting, drowsiness and convulsions. Symptoms in babies may include floppiness, refusing feeds, pale skin and high-pitched crying.

This illness can progress very quickly. If an individual is sick, check them often. Seek medical attention without delay if you are concerned. If their condition gets worse take them back to the doctor.

It is recommended that young adults living in student or other hostel type accommodation are vaccinated for group C meningococcal disease, which causes about 30% of cases in New Zealand. The vaccines are not free, please contact your doctor or nurse to discuss cost and vaccination.

You will find more information about vaccination at www.immune.org.nz.