

Media Release

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New Midland Smokefree Programme Director welcomed

Michelle Nathan has started her role as the Midland Smokefree Programme Director, a full time position across the Midland region's district health boards.

The primary goal of this position is to provide strategic leadership in the development of the Midland Smokefree Programme. The vision for this programme is a Smokefree Midland by 2020.

Michelle was selected from a strong line up of high calibre candidates. The Smokefree Director role is the first of its kind in the DHBs, and aims to improve the health of the Midland DHBs' populations by helping to reduce smoking.

Michelle Nathan's role is to provide vision and leadership to the four participating DHBs of Lakes, Bay of Plenty, Tairāwhiti and Waikato, to advance the vision statement.

She will be working at a strategic level, providing support to the DHBs' Chief Executives, local and central government, iwi, community leaders, businesses and communities to achieve the Smokefree goal.

Michelle says coming from a family of smokers and having been a smoker herself until recent years, she clearly understands addiction and how hard it is to give up smoking.

Michelle's tribal affiliations are Waikato, Te Aupouri and Ngati Porou. She says the high rates of smoking amongst Maori are well documented, and helping Maori say no to smoking is a huge challenge.

She says there are visible signs of success in smokefree developments in communities, and she is keen to help grow this success.

She says a key approach she wants to use is to leverage off successful role models, who have a story to tell about either being smokefree or working towards being smokefree.

Michelle has worked for Maori trusts, the Maori Health Commission as an analyst and policy advisor and managed the Tainui Maori Purchasing Organisation between 2000 and 2006. For the past three years she worked in key management roles within ACC.

Michelle will be based in Hamilton, but will work across the four signatories to the Midland Smokefree Vision, Bay of Plenty, Lakes, Waikato and Tairāwhiti DHBs.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Rebecca Silvester

Communications Officer

Bay of Plenty District Health Board

Tel: 07 579 8033

rebecca.silvester@bopdhb.govt.nz