



From the Chair

BY MARY HACKETT, CHAIR, BOPDHB

We have certainly had our first blast of winter here in the Bay of Plenty during the last few weeks, with ice and hail. I'm sure many gardens were damaged through these stormy episodes. Now is a good time to make sure your flu injections are up to date before we experience further blasts from the deep south.



Some of the work in progress at the DHB includes:

- **Progress on the Clinical School:** Former Tauranga buildings will make a base for the Clinical School and medical library at Whakatane and space is being refurbished for students at Tauranga. A Heads of Agreement with the Auckland University School of Health Sciences will give us medical students and others from early next year. Currently more than 300 students from all health disciplines receive clinical training through our Clinical School.
- **Tauranga's old maternity annex:** This is being demolished and the site will be used as much needed car parking for visitors, outpatients and doctors. We begin building the new East Wing in October. We are also well on the way to planning for Whakatane Hospital and continuing with upgrading power, electricity, boilers,

drains etc. all in preparation for a new hospital.

- **Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu):** Public Health staff continue to monitor the global and national situation and thus far the spread has been contained. While some people believe we have 'gone over the top' in our activity to contain an outbreak of H1N1 it would be far worse if we did nothing and suddenly had an epidemic of influenza for which we do not yet have a vaccine.
- **RSA:** The District Health Board has bought the land and buildings comprising the RSA, next door to the campus on Cameron Road. We take possession later this year and the purchase allows the DHB to house extended clinical activity and staff close to the main hospital in Tauranga. The RSA will move to Fahy's Motor Inn at Greerton, over the next months. The flats at the back of the property will remain under the control of the RSA for seven years to give everyone security of tenure over these years.

Babies screened for hearing loss

For new-born babies in the Bay of Plenty, a new hearing screening service means hearing loss can be identified and supported with professional help at an early stage.

Screening coordinator David Pullen says screening new-borns can have a positive impact on the lives of many young people.

"It means we can identify hearing problems that could affect critical speech and language development and social skills, before they can have a negative effect on young lives," he says. "Generally hearing difficulties are not detected in children until they are about three or four years old. By this time the effects are considerable. This can lead to ongoing problems with cognitive development, communication, educational and vocational achievement, social functioning and well-being. Early detection, support and early intervention have been shown to improve all these factors."

Three qualified screening staff are working from Tauranga Hospital, and two from Whakatane Hospital, with the aim to reach as many babies as possible.

Anyone with concerns over their child's hearing should contact



New mum Fiona Craig holds her two-day-old son Ryan, while his hearing is tested by screening coordinator David Pullen.

their GP or well-child provider.

The new service is in addition to the hearing testing for preschoolers that occurs all over the region

via the mobile hearing vans. The vans and the hearing nurses visit schools, kindergartens, kohanga reos and preschool centres.

New cardiac service

Bay of Plenty heart patients needing implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICDs) can get them at Tauranga Hospital now, instead of travelling to Waikato.

The appointment of specialist cardiologist Dr Dean Boddington has enabled the DHB to provide the service locally – a major boon for heart patients, who previously had to travel to Waikato Hospital in Hamilton.

"It means treatment and follow up are more accessible to patients and they don't have to factor in the time and expense of travelling over the Kaimais," says Dr Boddington.

The devices work like pacemakers, monitoring the heart's rhythm. They go one step further in that if the heart gets into a potentially fatal rhythm, the defibrillator gives it a shock to get it back to normal.

Dr Boddington expects to implant 30-35 per year for Bay of Plenty patients who have been identified as high risk for sudden cardiac death.

Sudden cardiac death caused by abnormal heart rhythms is an 'electrical' problem, according to Dr Boddington, unlike heart attacks and angina, which are more 'plumbing'.

"Abnormal rhythms can be caused by hereditary conditions, or a heart muscle weakened by heart attack damage. ICDs are often used



An implantable cardiac defibrillator (right) and a pacemaker.

in children with congenital heart diseases."

Dr Boddington says the BOPDHB has shown foresight in planning the service here, and has pulled together all the components of the service including radiology, anaesthesia and cardiology teams. He was attracted to the region by the chance to work with a good team, and the great lifestyle offered here in the Bay.

"It's a coup to get Dr Boddington," says chief operating officer Graham Dyer. "There is a shortage of cardiologists in NZ trained in this specialty area (Dr Boddington is one of ten electrophysiologists in NZ), and we are pleased to have him onboard, so we can offer this service to our communities."

Back to basics in Torere



Ngaitai Iwi Authority youth coordinator Tawhiao Kingi (far right) with some of the Torere kids who are exploring foods and activities of former generations.

Rangatahi (young people) from Torere in the Eastern Bay of Plenty are getting to grips with what it was like for their grandparents growing up in the area.

Ngaitai Iwi Authority youth coordinator Tawhiao Kingi received funding from the BOPDHB to put together a short film. In the film he interviews many of the iwi elders (pakeke) about the variety of food they ate and the activities they were involved in when growing up.

"There was a big gap between the adults and the young people of the area, they didn't communicate well," says Tawhiao. "The elders

thought the young people were spoilt and lazy, and the young people thought the elders didn't know what they were talking about. This was an opportunity to bring them closer together, get them talking and help them understand each other's worlds."

Tawhiao says one of the most significant things that the young people have learnt from the film is that it's more fun to get outside and make your own entertainment, rather than being indoors on the computer.

"In the film the elders talk about hunting, fishing and riding horses. This is when the young ones really

start to listen," he says.

They also talk about the kinds of food they cooked including kumara and different types of fish.

"The kids love hearing about the different ways food was prepared back then and they get a better understanding of where their food comes from," says Tawhiao.

Since the film was released more people in the area have approached Tawhiao to tell their story. He is hoping to continue with this as a way of educating young people on the importance of nutrition and physical activity, as well as engagement with their elders.

Winter a busy time

BY PHIL CAMMISH, CEO, BOPDHB

As winter approaches there is nothing more certain than that our Emergency Departments (EDs) will see an influx of people with illnesses traditionally linked to the change in season.

It is always frustrating that winter also seems to bring an increase in avoidable injuries such as those from car crashes caused by speed, alcohol and inattention. These unnecessary injuries occur at a peak time for hospital staff, and strain resources at times. I'd encourage everyone to try hard to make sure your family members are not visiting us this winter.

The H1N1 Influenza A (initially called swine flu) threat took the world by storm and the Bay of Plenty responded to a nationwide alert. Staff manning the emergency operations centre overseeing this pandemic threat have worked around the clock to ensure planning is in place should the threat become a reality. While they are unseen and unheralded, they have been providing a high level of coordinated protection for the community and helping to prevent an escalation in New Zealand. If this occurs, we will be ready.

We were delighted to formalise the relationship between the BOP Clinical School and Auckland University's Medical School with a memorandum of understanding signed this month. We are actively progressing our relationships with the tertiary sector and these initial starting blocks are turning



into actions which will see large numbers of student doctors, nurses and other health professionals training in our region.

To make space appropriate for teaching students, a major building is being taken in sections from Tauranga Hospital to Whakatane Hospital, with the first arriving on the truck on May 11. The buildings will be used to create a library, conference centre, meeting rooms and teaching spaces for the Clinical School.

Tauranga Hospital staff are preparing for building works to begin again, after a few months of peace and quiet. A number of enabling works will occur over the next few months, to ready the site for the construction of the new East Wing. Dismantling the old maternity annex will be an exercise in sustainability, as workmen will salvage and recycle as much recoverable material as possible. Demolition of the boiler house's unused chimney will tidy up the campus. Preparation of the main entrance for trenching for storm water works for the new building will require the removal of buildings at the front entry to the hospital next month. With the storm water works completed, we will be able to undertake further work on the main entrance to Tauranga Hospital and improve traffic flows.

Building on the move

Tauranga Hospital's former HIA (Health in Aging) building began its 11-stage move to Whakatane last week.



Section one of Tauranga Hospital's former HIA (Health in Aging) building was moved to Whakatane Hospital last week. Ten more sections will follow over the next four weeks.

The building is being split into 12 sections – one section will remain on site and 11 are relocating to Whakatane Hospital over the next four weeks. The first section moved in the early hours last Monday morning and subsequent moves will take place at a similar time when roads are not busy.

At Whakatane the pieces will be rejoined into two buildings and weather-proofed. They will eventually become home to the Clinical School, incorporating

teaching space, a conference centre, library and meeting rooms for undergraduate student placements in the Eastern Bay. In time, the space will also incorporate a skills laboratory (mock ward).

The HIA building provided health services for older people since the 1960s until the service moved into the new Tauranga Hospital in May last year. It was originally two separate buildings, the second half was relocated in the early 1970s and the two buildings were joined.

More students to train in Bay



More medical, nursing and allied health students will come to Bay hospitals and GP practices for training placements in coming years, a trend that is welcomed by the DHB.

The BOP Clinical School and the University of Auckland already collaborate in training health care professionals, but a Memorandum of Understanding signed last month with the faculty of medical and health sciences formalises the arrangement.

Clinical School business leader Lisa-Jane Dench says the DHB is placing around 470 undergraduates this year including 49 medical

students from Auckland University. "We hope the unique rural placements we can offer in the Eastern Bay will attract some of these students back to work here once qualified."

The two parties will also work together on research projects and the development of training facilities throughout the Bay.

Ian Reid, Acting Dean, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at the University of Auckland, says District Health Boards will increasingly become important business partners now the government has signalled medical student numbers may go up.

"We can't train health professionals if we don't have access to clinical environments," he says. "The BOPDHB regards training very highly and we are pleased to be able to formally acknowledge the arrangement we have had in place for some time. Clearly, working collaboratively will get significantly greater in coming years."

The BOP Clinical School also has formal partnerships in place with the University of Waikato, Auckland University of Technology, Waiariki Institute of Technology, Rotorua and Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi in Whakatane.

Hospital takes shape



Artist's impression of Tauranga Hospital's new East Wing.

The last stage of Tauranga Hospital's Project LEO building project – the new East Wing – is due to start in October and will take around 18 months to complete.

The East Wing will house the medical day-stay ward and endoscopy unit on the ground floor. ICU (intensive care unit) and CCU (coronary care unit) will be on the first floor. Floors two, three and four will not be included in

this building phase; they will be equipped as part of the hospital's future development.

Hospital visitors may notice some traffic re-routing as enabling works take place over the next few months before building can start.

Smoking still deathly issue in the Bay

A staggering 22 per cent of people over 15 in the Bay of Plenty are regular smokers, and the equivalent of a settlement the size of Kawerau is wiped out every year because of smoking, according to Bay of Plenty District Health Board smokefree coordinator Liz Spence.

"Five thousand New Zealanders die annually from smoking," says Liz "Five thousand is such a big number that it's hard to comprehend. But to put it into context, 5,000 deaths is the equivalent of losing everyone in Kawerau, every year. The really shocking thing is, these deaths are preventable."

The Auahi Kore/Bay of Plenty Smokefree Coalition is gearing up to celebrate World Smokefree Day on May 31 – a global event that encourages all smokers to 'give quitting a go'.

"We want smokers to know they can make a positive change for themselves, their family, and their loved ones, and that help is available, often at little or no cost," says Bronwyn Courtney from Toi Te Ora – Public Health.

Bronwyn says that most smokers want to quit.

"Research shows that more than 65 per cent of all smokers have made an attempt to quit in the last five years. This is very encouraging," she says.

Non-smoking friends, family and workmates can help by providing support and encouragement. For anyone preparing to



Trained quit coaches will be out in the community supporting World Smokefree Day. For more information call Liz Spence (Whakatane) 07 306 0667 or Sue Freeman (Tauranga) 07 579 5476.

quit smoking, here are some tips for making a successful attempt:

- write down the reasons you want to stop and put it somewhere you will see it every day
- tell your friends and family you are going to quit and ask for support
- set up 'no smoking' areas for yourself
- avoid situations where you are likely to smoke
- plan to spend the money you save on yourself or loved ones
- find out how you can get some nicotine replacement (NRT) to help you
- call Quitline 0800 778 778 (www.quit.org.nz) to request a quit smoking pack, or talk to a quit smoking advisor
- ask for help from your GP or pharmacist.

Face the Facts has been developed by the Health Sponsorship Council in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. It has the support of major health organisations in New Zealand. For more information visit www.facethefacts.org.nz.

Joint DHB move on smoking

Four District Health Boards are combining to make their central North Island districts smokefree by 2020.

Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Lakes and Tairāwhiti DHBs have signed a Smokefree Midland Vision Statement committed to achieving the Smokefree Midland goal over the next decade.

"The project is ambitious, but we are united in approaching it with a real sense of urgency. Anything less would be failing our communities," says BOPDHB Chair Mary

Hackett. "Smoking kills half of long-term smokers and is the biggest single preventable cause of ill health and early death in our communities – amounting to about 10 times the annual road toll in our region. This is a huge, avoidable and continuing toll on individuals, families and communities. Our children deserve a future where smoking is history."

A Midland Smokefree Programme Director is being recruited to work with local and central government, iwi, community leaders, business and communities to

achieve the smokefree goal. Many outdoor public places are already smokefree. Some Councils, such as Rotorua, have made their parks and playgrounds smokefree. Research shows the less children see smoking around them, the less likely they are to start.

Smokefree work will focus on increasing people's awareness of the dangers of smoking and the benefits of a smokefree life, helping smokers to quit and getting tobacco out of communities.



More people walking more often

Tauranga's 'City on its Feet' programme was a finalist in the 2008 National Sport and Recreation Sector Awards last month, developed by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC).

The programme has established 40 walking groups across the city for people of all ages.

"International research shows that by keeping active and maintaining strength, older people are less likely to need hospitalisation from slips, trips and falls," says BOPDHB public health manager Brian Pointon. "This low-impact exercise helps older people keep fit and maintain mobility. Ultimately they will be healthier and therefore feel safer living in their own homes for longer."

Pram walking groups for parents and care-givers have also been a huge success.

"Mothers with young children can become isolated and walking groups provide an opportunity for them to get together with others. It can help with weight loss too," says Brian. "Walking is an activity that's easy to participate in



Pram walking groups run by Tauranga's 'City on its Feet' programme are very popular.

and is great for developing social contacts. It becomes a habit which is vital for long-term health and wellbeing."

SPARC praised the project as a great example of central and local government agencies working with the local sports trust to deliver a programme best suited to a local community's needs.

'City on its Feet', launched in August 2005, is supported by Tauranga City Council (TCC), Sport Bay of Plenty (Sport BOP), Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB), Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Sport & Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). For more information visit www.cityonitsfeet.org.nz.

In Brief

Immunisation your best protection

Vaccination against seasonal influenza is available NOW and will be until June 30 – the earlier you get the vaccine the safer you'll be. Being fit and healthy will not protect you from contracting influenza. Influenza immunisation is FREE until the end of June for people over 65 or those with respiratory problems. Contact your GP practice or healthcare centre. For more information visit www.influenza.org.nz or call 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466863).

Help just a phone call away

If you or a family member is feeling unwell and you're not sure what to do, call Healthline on 0800 611 116. It's free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Registered nurses will offer advice on what to do. Healthline offers a Well Child telephone advice service for parents and caregivers of under five year olds with questions about parenting or health matters. For more information visit www.healthline.co.nz.

Round two of HPV vaccine

Round two of the school-based HPV vaccination programme is underway in the Bay of Plenty. The vaccine, Gardasil, protects against the main viruses responsible for cervical cancer and genital warts and is available free to all girls and young women born after 1 January 1990. Girls from year 8 up can receive three doses over six months. Eligible young women who have left school can get the free vaccine from their GP or health clinic. For more information visit www.cervicalcancervaccine.govt.nz.

Community response team on board

Older people in the Western Bay of Plenty with acute health issues will benefit from a new Community Response Team. The aim is for people to remain in their own homes and communities longer with this increased support. The team includes an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a social worker, a nurse and a team leader. They will work together to develop treatment plans for patients to reduce subsequent decline in health, and refer to other organisations and services where needed.

B4 School Checks

More Bay of Plenty youngsters are starting school ready for action thanks to large numbers taking up the free B4 School Check. The Ministry of Health is replacing new-entrant health checks with the B4 School Check at aged four to ensure youngsters get the best possible start to school. The checks include hearing and vision tests and health and developmental checks which are carried out at early childhood centres and kohanga reo, in the family home or at a health clinic. Parents are encouraged to ask their GP, Plunket nurse, health provider or early childhood centre about the checks. For more information please call coordinator Noeline White, 07 577 3329.

Making a difference

International Nurses Day (May 12) and International Day of the Midwife (May 5) are celebrated across the world each year. The Bay of Plenty District Health Board would like to recognise the contribution that more than 1,400 nurses and midwives make to the organisation. Board Chair Mary Hackett, with 51 years in the nursing field, said that nursing is an exciting and professional career and commended the 300 plus nurses currently doing post-graduate study in the Bay of Plenty.

Free ride at hospital

A generous gift from First Credit Union has meant Tauranga Hospital out-patients can get a free ride from the lower car park to the various parts of the campus they need to visit.



Battery-powered, the new patient buggy at Tauranga Hospital is a quiet and smooth ride.

"Having the ability to move people around from the car park to where they need to be on campus is great," says chief operating officer Graham Dyer. "For elderly, immobile or sick patients, it can be a difficult and laborious journey from one place to another and we are delighted to be able to offer this service."

Getting the buggy began with a conversation between an elderly cancer patient and cancer society volunteer Colleen Kendrick.

"She talked about the struggle she experienced to get from x-ray to the cancer centre," says Colleen.

The conversation led to a petition, and the hospital took it up and approached a range of agencies requesting financial support for a buggy.

First Credit Union general manager Peter Iles had visited the

hospital just months before and knew exactly what the request was about. He says he was puffing when he got up the stairs, and he could imagine it was a tough hike for unwell people.

"When we were approached we could see the need very clearly. It supports our staff in the hospital and is part of our 'people helping people' philosophy. It is something tangible to show we care."

The buggy will do continuous circuits of the campus throughout each day, and people can either flag it down or wait at designated points. Battery-powered, it is a quiet and smooth ride.

Health consumer advocate Anne Burnett described it as a wonderful asset for the hospital. "The community will benefit hugely," she said.

Are you enrolled with a GP?

Registering with a GP rather than relying on the Emergency Department at the hospital is a much better option, according to hospital doctors.

"ED is for emergencies and our staff are experts in emergency care," says Clinical Director of Emergency Medicine at Tauranga Hospital Derek Sage. "If someone comes to ED with a condition that would be best treated by a GP and is non-urgent, we offer them the alternative of going to their GP who is an expert in primary care."

GPLiaison Andy Humphrey says that a GP is the primary healthcare provider for ongoing care of health problems, advice and guidance and referrals for specialist care. Practice Nurses are usually available for vaccinations and cervical screening.

"It's quick and easy to register with a GP and they will work with you to make sure you get the best possible care," he says.

Anyone who has recently moved into the area, or isn't yet registered, is encouraged to enrol with their GP before problems arise.

"Your new GP can arrange to get your health records from your previous GP so that your medical history is available straight away," says Andy.

Andy says many people don't

realise that if they are registered with a GP, rather than attending as a casual patient they will save money.

"The cost to visit a GP is significantly less if you are registered with your local practice, rather than attending as a casual patient" he says. "So it's really worth taking the time to do it."

Anyone unsure about where their local GP practice is can find out by looking in the phone book, asking at the Citizen's Advice Bureau or at the local pharmacy.

Having a baby?

Are you aware that your midwife (or lead maternity carer) is only responsible for you and your baby for up to six weeks after birth? At that stage, your midwife will discharge you into the care of your GP. For the safety and good health of you and your baby, it's important that you enrol with a GP before birth, or as soon as possible afterwards.

Whooping cough warning

Parents are being urged to immunise their babies on time as the region faces a potential whooping cough epidemic this year. There have been 24 cases in the Bay of Plenty this year compared to 18 for the whole of 2008.

"One of the best ways to protect babies is to get them immunised at six weeks, three and five months," says Toi Te Ora – Public Health Services, Medical Officer of Health, Dr Jim Miller.

Rotorua father Ian Guy knows what it's like to watch a child suffer from whooping cough - his daughter Maddie got it at three weeks old.

"My wife Jane and I are paediatric nurses so we felt pretty confident caring for our new baby. When Maddie kept becoming dusky we took her to our local GP, who admitted her to hospital," says Ian. "The next day Maddie developed spasmodic coughing, which is what whooping cough is known for, and ended up on a

ventilator for two weeks requiring considerable sedation and blood pressure support."

Ian believes Maddie caught the illness from a child at her sister's school who hadn't been immunised.

"Children and adults can help prevent the spread of whooping cough by covering their cough, using tissues and washing and drying their hands after coughing or sneezing," says Dr Jim Miller.

For more information call 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) or visit www.immune.org.nz.

If your child has experienced whooping cough, we'd be interested to hear your story, contact Kylie Ruegg on 07 577 3768 or kylie.ruegg@bopdnh.govt.nz.



Ian Guy with daughter Maddie (9)

What to look for

Whooping cough usually starts with a runny nose and dry cough, which turns into coughing attacks. The 'whoop' sound occurs when children draw breath after a coughing bout.

Swine flu update

While there have been no confirmed cases and very few suspected cases of H1N1 Influenza A (swine flu) in our region, DHB staff continue to monitor the situation closely.

Globally the influenza is still spreading extensively with more

than 6500 cases reported to date, across 33 countries.

A joint BOP/Lakes DHB emergency operations centre remains on high alert should the situation escalate.

"It's still being taken very

seriously," says Medical Officer of Health Dr Phil Shoemack. While he believes there is little current risk from H1N1 Influenza A in this area, he says DHBs continue planning to be able to respond to a national change in alert level.

"We don't know how the situation may develop, it's important to limit the spread of the virus."

Keep winter bugs at bay

Winter brings the inevitable spread of infections from the common cold to more debilitating vomiting and diarrhoea bugs. Hospital patients, the elderly and young children can be particularly vulnerable and there are things that everyone can do to help prevent the spread of infections. Here are some quick tips for keeping yourself and your family safe and healthy during the winter months.

Wash your hands

Our hands are the most common part of our bodies to transmit germs. If you are visiting a place with vulnerable people such as hospital, a rest home or preschool, always wash your hands when you arrive, and again when you leave. At both Whakatane and Tauranga Hospitals there is an alcohol gel dispenser at the entrance to the main buildings and at every patient bedside – this is just as effective as washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Don't visit friends or family in hospital if you are sick

Lots of bugs get passed around our communities during winter, particularly those causing diarrhoea and vomiting which are



Our hands are the most common part of our bodies to transmit germs.

easy to transmit to others. If you are unwell in any way, please don't visit people in hospital or in care while you are sick. If you suffer from a chronic condition that leaves you vulnerable to infection, do not visit patients in hospital.

Stay at home if you are sick

A high proportion of bugs get passed around communities by people going to work or school when they are sick. Workers and school children should stay away from the office or school when they are sick so they do not infect others. Be aware of the germs you can spread when out socialising with friends. A person is most infectious during the early stages of an infection.

Reduce the spread of germs

Follow these three simple steps and teach them to your children:

CATCH IT – germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

BIN IT – germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

KILL IT – hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.