



From the Chair

BY MARY HACKETT, CHAIR, BOPDHB

As I write this I am on the West Coast of the South Island and it feels like the cold capital of NZ with temperatures not getting above 8 or 10 degrees. With a steady stream of tourists arriving every day, this puts the population at risk of colds and flu not to mention Influenza A (H1N1), otherwise known as swine flu.



usual seasonal flu causes the death of up to 400 people a year, these are usually elderly people with other problems.

I am sure you have seen the Minister of Health Hon. Tony Ryall talking about what we are doing nationally and be assured that locally in the Bay of Plenty we are treating this new strain of flu very seriously.

On a more cheerful note you will see on both Whakatane and Tauranga Hospital sites that things are moving quickly; a new building at Whakatane for the Clinical School and library, and the buildings disappearing on the Tauranga site to make way for more car parking.

We are now the new owners of the RSA, although it will be a bit later in the year before we can begin to move staff. This will provide space for community based clinical services such as District Nursing.

Stay warm and healthy this winter and see your GP early if you do not feel well.

In the Bay of Plenty there is a danger of flu spreading particularly during a particularly cold winter. It is important we stay warm, dress our children warmly for school and make sure we eat well; this at least will give us some immunity to seasonal colds and flu. Those who have flu symptoms should stay away from others where possible.

Although many people believe health services have overreacted to swine flu, the issue that distinguishes this from other seasonal flu is that it is highly contagious and appears to affect mostly young people with devastating results. This is why we have been and still are cautious in our approach to this new virus. Our

Sore throats can break a heart

Rheumatic fever, which is the result of an untreated throat infection, often leads to heart damage and premature death. It is thought of as a disease of the past, but the Eastern Bay has unacceptably high incident rates.



Annually in the Bay of Plenty there are 34 cases of rheumatic fever per 100,000 people, which is three times the national rate. Opotiki, Kawerau and Murupara have much higher rates at 88-258 per 100,000.

Rheumatic fever commonly appears in school-aged children and Opotiki district nurse Sandra Ball says that it is preventable and treatable.

"The disease is caused by complications of an untreated streptococcal throat infection, commonly known as 'strep throat'," she says. "By having a simple throat swab at the doctors, the GP can identify if the sore throat is being caused by this bacteria. If this is the case, treatment is through a course of an appropriate antibiotic."

Eighty nine per cent of the rheumatic fever cases across the

BOPDHB region, and all of the cases in Opotiki, Kawerau and Murupara, are of Maori descent.

Based on a successful project in Whangaroa, Te Ao Hou a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) in Opotiki is developing a rheumatic fever prevention program. The program will educate the community about the disease and introduce throat-swabbing in schools. Since implementing a similar program, Whangaroa has had no further cases of rheumatic fever.

"Momentum is gathering as Te Ao Hou, with the support Toi Te Ora Public Health, finalises the Eastern BOP prevention program," says Sandra. "We anticipate throat swabbing in Opotiki schools in term four this year and in Kawerau and Murupara in 2010."

Child friendly hospital space

Whakatane Hospital's child assessment unit (CAU) opened recently, allowing acutely unwell children to be diagnosed in a child-friendly, child-focused environment.

CAU nurse Sharon Harris says the unit is a place where children can be observed for a few hours and assessed by a paediatrician.

"We have always done this, but with the opening of the unit we've created a specific environment that children will feel comfortable in," she says.

The unit has three beds and is closely linked to the children's ward and the emergency department.

"We are taking GP referrals and children who have presented



Nurse Sharon Harris in the child assessment unit at Whakatane Hospital.

through ED. As word spreads we expect to see more referrals from a wider range of primary providers."

The child assessment unit is open from 8am to 3pm, Monday to Friday.

New chief operating officer

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board is welcoming a new chief operating officer early next month. Phillip Balmer has worked in various executive positions over the last 15 years in New Zealand, India, USA and the Middle East.



Exposure to health care in different cultural settings has given him an appreciation for the importance of working with the local culture.

"Whilst we are all different, no matter where I have worked, every community has a common concern for their health and the health of their loved ones," he says. "BOPDHB's vision of 'healthy thriving communities' moves the focus from simply surviving to enjoying life to the full."

Phillip says healthcare workers play a significant part in people's lives from birth to death, often during very personal and

demanding times.

"I was very sick as a youngster and experienced this first hand. I was inspired to pursue a career in health. My time in clinical roles has given me a good understanding of clinical issues and a better understanding of what is important for the patient."

Phillip says he is looking forward to joining the Bay of Plenty team and is grateful for the effective leadership provided by Graham Dyer and his clinical and management team and the strong oversight provided by the CEO and Board.

"BOPDHB has a well established reputation for working closely with iwi in the area, collaborating with other DHBs and effectively integrating primary and secondary care," he says. "I will be focusing on strengthening these relationships whilst making sure we spend our money wisely."

Nurse's hidden talents benefit campaign

A nurse with a broken leg can't carry the full load on a ward – but Whakatane Hospital medical ward's Jay Pregonero became a graphic designer during his rehabilitation, and helped design posters for a hand hygiene campaign.

Jay trained in the Philippines after being inspired by his brother Julius, who is also a nurse at Whakatane Hospital. Prior to nursing he spent a year studying fine arts and architecture, and had been an editorial cartoonist in College.

Hospital coordinator Fiona Burns knew he had done some great caricatures of staff, and thought his talents might be useful.

"We decided it would be a good use of Jay's skills, and could be part of his return to work programme after breaking his leg. We were delighted with the images he created to help us raise awareness of how clean hands save lives."

Jay has been nursing four years, nearly two of those at Whakatane. He loves the laid-back lifestyle of the Eastern Bay, and an enthusiasm for skateboarding led to the broken leg last year.

"It was an interesting experience being a patient," he says. "I tried not to bother the nurses because I could tell when they were busy and under pressure." (This made him a dream patient, according to Fiona!)



Nurse Jay Pregonero used his other talents to design a poster for a hand hygiene campaign.

Oral health a priority

BY PHIL CAMMISH, CEO, BOPDHB

You will notice in this edition of Health Matters a focus on oral health. This is a key health issue for our population and our statistics don't stand up well against the national average.

Children with poor oral health can develop shyness and a lack of self-confidence. This can have a number of consequences into adult life such as difficulty in job interviews and even anxiety. The DHB is committed to playing its part in ensuring our children get the best possible start in life.

Similarly this DHB needs to lift its game in the area of childhood immunisation and I know significant work is going on both within the DHB and Primary Health Organisations (who coordinate the activities of GPs) to bring rates up to nationally accepted levels. Parents can also play their part in keeping a check on their children's immunisation status.

As we enter a new financial year, it is clear that the economic



recession is something we will need to respond to as demand for services rises and available funding doesn't grow. As a DHB we are looking at a number of avenues to redirect spending so that we can continue to deliver the core essential services in line with government and the public's expectations. We have included in our thinking rationalisation of back-office functions. We are also starting to talk with regional DHB colleagues to identify where joining up services could lead to greater efficiency and the release of resources to put into the frontline of healthcare delivery.

I would like to recognise the huge efforts that many members of the DHB and primary healthcare staff have put in to first containing and then managing the effects of the Influenza A (H1N1) virus. It has put strain on staff and I'm sure that the community will join me in thanking them for their unstinting efforts.

Healthy smile healthy child

New state-of-the-art dental facilities in the Bay of Plenty are set to improve the health of our children's teeth.

"By the age of five, the average Bay of Plenty child has three decayed, missing or filled teeth," says Bay of Plenty District Health Board oral health project manager Leonie Pritchard. "This is one of the worst rates in the country and the BOPDHB is committed to providing improved services to turn the situation around."

The purpose-built clinics use the latest in dental technology, including digital x-rays, and it is hoped that more children will be seen by dental professionals more regularly. The fixed sites are based within schools and supported by a fleet of mobile clinics which travel throughout the remote areas of the region.

Soon to be appointed health educators will work with providers throughout the Bay of Plenty to move the focus to promoting healthy teeth and disease prevention.

Leonie says that diseases of the teeth and gums are among the most common of all health problems.

"Poor health in teeth and



The new mobile dental clinics are equipped with the latest dental technology and equipment.

gums can cause much pain and discomfort, as well as contributing to a loss of self esteem," she says. "Dental decay in children can affect their growth, development and quality of life and impact on the family as a whole. For preschoolers we rely on parents to take their children to the dentist. This is crucial for children as having healthy teeth and gums in childhood sets them up for

improved oral health later in life." Building the new facilities is part of a three year project to redevelop oral health services for children and adolescents.

"Oral health services are free for all children up to the age of 18. Many adolescents don't realise that they are entitled to free care even if they have left school, whether in paid employment or not," says Leonie.



Whakatane Intermediate School's dental clinic has recently been upgraded with new state-of-the-art equipment.



Mobile dental clinics mean children in remote areas of the region don't have to travel far to visit the dentist.

Oral health services

Parents - what you need to know

- Having healthy teeth is part of good overall health and well-being.
- Children develop good hygiene habits early in life.
- Promoting good oral health in young people has benefits over a lifetime.
- Oral health services are free for all children in the Bay of Plenty from 0-18 years old.
- Well Child/Tamariki Ora providers can provide a referral to the community oral health service. For more details visit www.moh.govt.nz or call your local GP for a list of providers in your area.
- B4 School Checks for preschoolers now include an oral health check so make

sure you book your child in with your local provider. For more details visit www.moh.govt.nz/b4schoolcheck or call 07 577 3329.

- A Kaupapa Maori service is available at Kohanga Reo in the Western Bay of Plenty. For more information call 07 577 4184.

Teenagers – what you need to know

- You can get your teeth checked for free up until the age of 18 – so get your teeth in good shape now before you have to pay for it!
- It is quick and easy to enrol at your local clinic. For Western BOP call either 07 577 3335 or 07 577 4184. For Eastern BOP call 07 307 1548.

Fluoridation of water supplies

Adding Fluoride to drinking water is an ongoing topic of debate in our community. Here are some of the key views for and against.

For

- Fluoride makes teeth more resistant to decay by strengthening the tooth surface and interfering with the growth of the bacteria which cause cavities.
- Fluoridation of water supplies is one of the most effective methods to improve oral health across all age groups. Oral health comparisons between communities with and without fluoridation, where other factors are similar, show that fluoridation has clear health benefits.

- Fluoridated water can be supplied to all households, so reaches those people who are less likely to improve their oral health through other means e.g. good nutrition and oral hygiene.
- Fluoridation is one of the most researched health interventions, and has been shown to be a safe way to improve oral health. None of the claims that fluoride causes cancer have been substantiated.

Against

- Fluoridation of water supplies is an intervention where

individual consumers have not given consent.

- Other methods for improving oral health can be as effective, such as educating people about improving their diet, regular tooth-brushing with fluoride toothpastes and enrolling preschool children with their local school dental service.
- Too much fluoride can cause health issues such as fluorosis or mottling effects in teeth.
- Too much fluoride can lead to osteoporosis and increased numbers of bone fractures in older people.

Managing chronic pain better

Bay of Plenty patients with chronic pain conditions, like 25 year old Tammie McLaren, are benefiting from a new approach to managing their treatment. The pain management programme has a strong focus on self-management of persisting pain and is helping to get Tammie back on her feet.

"Tammie has chronic regional pain syndrome (CRPS) in her foot following back surgery in March," says BOPDHB physiotherapist, Heather Griffin.

With the support of a team of specialists, Tammie is already seeing increased activity and fitness and is returning to work soon.

As well as individual patient assessments, a Pain Management Group Program runs at regular intervals throughout the year.

"This is an intensive three week course with a focus on exercise, relaxation training and pacing techniques in pain management, as well as effective stress management and goal setting," says Heather.

"We are proud to be the first DHB to offer such a service outside of New Zealand's main centres" says team leader, Scott Jones.

Anyone open to learning new ways to manage persisting pain is advised to talk to their GP about a referral to 'Backup'.



Tammie McLaren (front left) with her team of specialists; physiotherapist Heather Griffin (standing left), psychologist Tanaya Bretherton (back right) and clinical nurse specialist Mariet Kerjeses-Laverty (front right).

Bay of Plenty Area Chronic Pain Pathway (BACPP), dubbed 'Backup', is based at Tauranga Hospital and will extend to Whakatane Hospital with a group

program before the end of the year. The team comprises a specialist pain consultant, a clinical nurse specialist, a physiotherapist, a psychologist and an occupational therapist.

In Brief

HPV – it takes three

Young women and girls are reminded they need three doses of the HPV cervical cancer vaccine to become fully immunised. If you've had your first or second dose, don't forget to go back to your health clinic for the next one. The vaccine, which protects against the main viruses responsible for cervical cancer and genital warts, is free of charge to young women born since 1 January 1990 who have left school. A free, school-based programme is continuing throughout the Bay of Plenty for girls in years 8-13. Every year around 160 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in New Zealand and 60 women die from it.

Health & Safety success

BOPDHB has become the first DHB to achieve internationally recognised health and safety standards following a recent ACC audit. ACC CEO, Dr Jan White, commended the DHB for being particularly strong in three key areas: management of work and non-work related injuries and illnesses; accident prevention and safety programmes; staff health promotion and wellness. "This is an outstanding achievement for such a large, complex organisation," she said. BOPDHB CEO Phil Cammish said the real winners are our patients. "If we have well, motivated staff who feel well in themselves and are encouraged and supported by their organisation, then the people who win are our patients."

Funding now available

Hapu, marae and Maori communities are invited to apply for funding from the BOPDHB to increase physical activity and improve nutrition in their communities. Application criteria includes providing evidence of projects with a focus on increasing regular, sustained exercise and improving nutritional food preparation and consumption. Projects may include targeted exercise or organised activity programmes; community gardens or cooking demonstrations; cuisine or physical activity skills development; nutrition or physical activity workshops. For more information or to apply for funding contact the HEHA (Healthy Eating Healthy Action) Maori community coordinator Cynthia Turuwhenua on 07 579 8555 or email cynthia.turuwhenua@bopdhb.govt.nz.

Te Puna Hauora on the move

Te Puna Hauora provides health services for Maori, who make up 15 per cent of the region's population. The service is designed to improve and maintain the health and well being of our turoro, our patients. Until recently, the service was operating near the entrance of Tauranga Hospital, however preparation of the main entrance for trenching for storm water works has required the removal of the building. The team are now based on the corner of 20th Avenue and Cameron Road. Ongoing construction means access to the building is via a walkway on 20th Avenue. For more information please call 07 579 8560.

Best protection for your baby

As whooping cough cases continue to rise, parents and caregivers are reminded to immunise their baby or child on time – it's one of the best ways to protect them from whooping cough which is a highly infectious and potentially fatal infection. There have been 50 cases of whooping cough in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts so far this year (to July 3), compared to six for this time in 2008. For more information about immunisation contact your doctor, nurse, Healthline, PlunketLine, 0800 IMMUNE, or visit www.immune.org.nz or www.moh.govt.nz. Thank you to those who came forward to share their personal whooping cough story. Some of these heart felt experiences will be used to highlight how real this problem is in our community.

ABC to quit smoking

Smoking rates in the Bay of Plenty are among some of the highest in the country and the BOPDHB is committed to supporting more people to quit.

Jethro LeRoy has taken on the new role of GP Smokefree Champion. He will be working with GP practices across the Bay of Plenty to ensure that as many GPs as possible offer their patients the opportunity to quit.

"I will be educating GPs, smoking cessation staff and practice nurses on the ABCs of smoking cessation. These are: A. Ask the patient if they smoke, B. give Brief advice on quitting, C. offer Cessation support, for example nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)," says Jethro. "My first priority is to try and make an impact in the Eastern Bay where there are some of the highest smoking rates. Smoking rates in Kawerau are 38.5 per cent compared to the national rate of 20 per cent so we have quite a bit of work to do."

As part of the Ministry of Health's 'Give quitting a go' programme, it is hoped that more people will ask for help.

"A GP's opinion has a major influence in a person's decision making and I'd encourage people to ask their GP about the options for quitting," says Jethro.

The part time role allows Jethro to continue working as a GP at Ngati Kahu Hauora in Bethlehem.

"I grew up in Te Puke and have always had an interest in Maori health and trying to reduce some of the disparities between Maori and European NZ health," he says.

For more information on quitting smoking visit www.smokingcessationabc.org.nz.

HEY GUYS! THE STEAMERS TAKE THEIR HEALTH SERIOUSLY. SO SHOULD YOU.

If you want to be more active, eat better, stop smoking, understand diabetes and risks, find out about 'green prescription' or know that your heart is in good shape, then join us at your local rugby club for a Men's Health Evening.

You'll hear a Steamers' Player talk about the team's focus on fitness & health, and you'll then hear from expert speakers on men's health and wellness. There's food and merchandise giveaways – plus the chance to mix & mingle, ask questions and undertake some simple health tests.

DON'T BURY YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR HEALTH!

Join us from 7.30-9.30pm at these venues:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 15 July, Opotiki | Opotiki Rugby Club |
| 22 July, Murupara | Murupara Rugby Club |
| 29 July, Kawerau | Kawerau Rugby Club |
| 5 August, Whakatane | Paroa Rugby Club |
| 12 August, Tauranga | Tauranga Sports Rugby Club |
| 26 August, Te Puke | Rangiorua Rugby Club |
| 9 September, Katikati | Katikati Rugby Club |
| 16 September, Tauranga | Rangataua Rugby Club |

Organised in conjunction with Bay of Plenty District Health Board

GP referral to hospital specialists

People who have a non-acute condition or health issue that their general practitioner (GP) thinks needs further diagnosis or treatment by a hospital specialist will be referred to Tauranga or Whakatane hospitals.

The process starts when their GP writes a referral letter to the hospital specialist outlining the person's symptoms, their assessment of the degree of urgency, and other relevant information. This is to help the hospital specialist determine the priority to give to the referral which is done by giving the referral letter a 'grade'.

Once referrals have been graded by the hospital specialist, they will either be given a timeframe for their first specialist assessment, or if the person is unlikely to be seen within six months, the referral letter will be sent back to the GP. Either way, their GP must be advised of this decision within 10 working days of receipt of the referral letter by the hospital.

Public hospitals have a set amount of annual funding for both acute and non-acute (elective) treatments. These funds must be balanced between acute health service priorities such as emergency care, maternity services, intensive care, cardiac care and elective services such as ophthalmology and orthopaedic joint replacement.

"Some patients need treatment more urgently than others," says chief operating officer Graham Dyer. "For example, someone

suffering severe pain from their condition would generally be prioritised for treatment more quickly than a person with occasional discomfort. Community demand for public hospital services is often greater than the ability of the hospitals to meet that demand and we have to treat those with the greatest need first," says Graham.

Public hospitals must ensure that people accepted for assessment by a specialist do not wait more than six months for their first specialist appointment, and no more than six months for any required treatment after that.

"If someone's condition worsens while they are waiting for assessment or treatment, or after the GPs original referral has been returned, then they should contact their GP who will seek a specialist reassessment," says Graham.

Access to assessment or treatment should never exceed six months once accepted by the hospital, however the timeframes within that six months vary both among the different surgical specialties and within urgency categories. The average time frames for each can be found on the BOPDHB website - www.bopdhb.govt.nz - click on Patient Information, then Elective Services.

Seasonal influenza vaccine free for all

Seasonal influenza vaccination has now been made available free for all New Zealanders until the end of September 2009.

Medical Officer of Health, Dr Phil Shoemack is encouraging anyone who has not yet been immunised this year with the influenza vaccine to contact their local GP practice and arrange an appointment.

"Immunisation will give you the best protection from common influenza viruses circulating this season. It will not offer

protection from Influenza A (H1N1), however other influenza viruses can be just as serious," he says.

The Ministry of Health has purchased an extra 125,000 doses of the seasonal influenza vaccine, and has made this available free to all New Zealanders to reduce the impact of the current Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic.

New Public Health website

Toi Te Ora Public Health Service has a new community website. On the website you can find all the latest information on Influenza A (H1N1) swine flu, updates on local health warnings, and user-friendly information about health issues regarding our community, our workplaces, our education and our environment. Go to www.toiteorapublichealth.govt.nz.

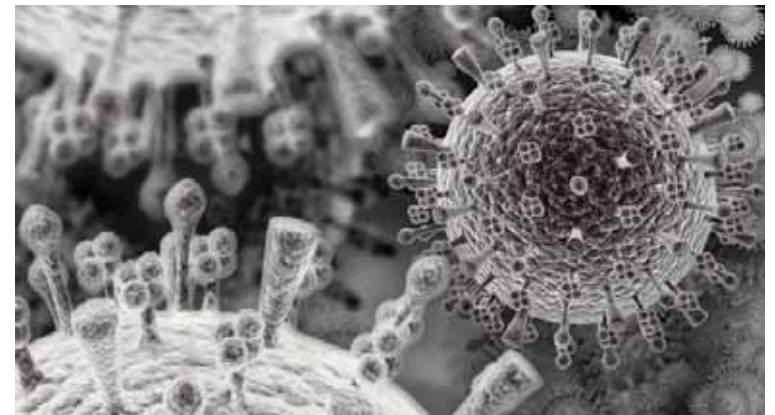


Influenza A (H1N1) update

The Bay of Plenty's health service is now operating in a 'manage it' phase in response to the Influenza A (H1N1) outbreak. Effort is focused on ensuring people understand how best they can protect themselves and assisting frontline health professionals with managing treatment.

"Most people with influenza should begin to feel better within a week," says Medical Officer of Health Dr Phil Shoemack. "Sometimes an underlying medical condition such as asthma, or a heart problem can result in more serious illness and the person will need to have a medical assessment. These complications can develop with seasonal influenza as well as the new H1N1 pandemic strain of influenza."

Anyone who thinks they may have influenza should stay home, keep warm, ensure they drink plenty of fluids, and limit the number of people with whom they have contact. However, Dr Shoemack stresses the importance of seeking medical advice if severe symptoms are experienced.



When to seek medical advice

Seek medical advice from Healthline 0800 611 116 or your healthcare provider BY PHONE if you, or the person you are caring for, has:

- a high temperature that is not responding to attempts to reduce it
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- severe coughing
- difficulty waking up or feels disoriented or confused
- started to feel better but then gets a high fever and starts to feel unwell again
- a serious condition such as respiratory disease, heart disease, liver disease, blood disorders, neurological conditions or has immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV).

The difference between influenza and a cold

| Influenza | A Cold |
|--|---|
| Moderate illness which can last 7-10 days | Mild illness usually lasting 2-3 days |
| Fever (usually high) | Mild fever |
| Shivering | A runny nose |
| Muscle aches | Muscle aches uncommon |
| Headache (may be severe) | Mild headache (congested sinuses) |
| Dry cough may become moist | Sometimes a cough |
| Can suffer severe complications (e.g. pneumonia) | Complications uncommon |
| Bed rest necessary | With a cold you can usually 'struggle on' |

Guidelines for protecting yourself and your family from influenza

- If you've got flu-like symptoms, stay at home until you are clear of symptoms, particularly coughing and sneezing, as you can easily spread germs to others. You are most infectious for the first two to three days after symptoms start.
- 'Stay at home' doesn't just mean stay home from work or school, it means staying away from the supermarket, visiting friends and family, or attending sporting or community events.
- Individuals and communities can help limit the spread of infection through good personal hygiene. This includes covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and washing your hands frequently with soap and water.
- For most people influenza is a mild to moderate illness. However, there are risks of it developing into something



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

more severe. Seek medical advice if conditions worsen by phoning Healthline 0800 611 116 or your local healthcare provider.

For more information and advice

on how to protect yourself and your family this winter against seasonal and pandemic influenza, visit the Toi Te Ora Public Health Service website - www.toiteorapublichealth.govt.nz.