

Bay of Plenty District Health Board is committed to improving and protecting the health of the communities in the Bay of Plenty district.

Position Statement – Auahi Kore (Smokefree)

Bay of Plenty District Health Board supports and advocates for actions to achieve the Government's Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal¹. Despite significant decline in the overall number of people smoking some stark inequalities remain, particularly for Māori and Pacific people. The Bay of Plenty District Health Board is committed to achieving equity for all sub-populations within the Bay of Plenty.

Smoking and second-hand smoke exposure is one of the leading causes of preventable death and disease in Aotearoa New Zealand, and increases the risk of stroke, heart disease and many cancers. Smoking is decreasing, with only 13% of people smoking in Aotearoa New Zealand². However, the prevalence of smoking among Māori is 35% and among Pacific people 25%².

Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of complications at the time the baby is born, and of the baby being small³. Smaller babies are more likely to become overweight adults⁴. Smoking in the household is a risk factor for many adverse outcomes including Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI). Currently 13% of women smoke during pregnancy. However, the rate is higher for women under 20 years of age (31%), Māori (37%), and those living in poorer communities (25%)².

Only 3% of 15-17 year olds currently smoke and more than 80% have never tried a cigarette. However, 20% of 18-24 year olds smoke. Māori smokers start smoking at an earlier age, on average at just over 14 years of age. Preventing young people from taking up smoking is a key strategy for reducing tobacco use, as research shows people are unlikely to start smoking after the age of 25².

The social and physical environment affects the uptake of smoking and the success of quitting. Having easier access to cigarettes, whānau and friends who smoke and living in a community where smoking is a normal activity makes it more likely a child will take up smoking².

Creating smokefree environments where people live, learn, work and play, and reducing the availability of tobacco can help reduce the uptake of smoking, particularly among youth. Smokefree environments also help those who are trying to quit⁵. Appropriate stop smoking support increases the chance of quitting and remaining smokefree⁶. Reducing the smoking of cigarettes also reduces the volume of litter and environmental impact from cigarette butts.

Vaping products (or E-cigarettes) are electrical devices that produce a vapour, rather than smoke, by heating a solution (e-juice) which often contains nicotine and flavourings. Vaping products can help people quit smoking. There is no longitudinal research confirming safety of vaping, but research indicates it carries much less risk than smoking tobacco⁷.

The potential for vaping to improve public health by helping smokers to quit is significant. However, it will be important to ensure it does not provide a route into tobacco use by children or non-smokers and to prevent non-smokers, particularly youth, from taking up vaping⁷.



The Bay of Plenty District Health Board is committed to:

- The Government's Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal where more than 95% of the population are smokefree (Ministry of Health, 2016).
- Action to achieve equity by supporting Māori and Pacific, pregnant women and youth to remain smokefree or to quit smoking.
- Supporting interventions which reduce smoking such as the creation of smokefree public spaces and smokefree cars, further increases in tobacco excise tax, licencing of tobacco retailers, regulation of nicotine content and support for stop smoking services.
- Enforcement of the Smokefree Environments Act 1990 and Smokefree Environment Regulation 2017.
- Local community action to encourage smokefree environments (such as outdoor public spaces, workplaces, homes, cars, and retailers).
- Creating a smokefree generation by supporting children to grow up in a smokefree society.
- Collaboration and advocacy with local and central government, health organisations, community groups and other agencies to support action to reduce tobacco use. This includes the use of strategies such as dramatic tax increases, reductions in retail supply and the requirement for denicotinised cigarettes.
- Supporting stop smoking services to help smokers quit.
- Ensuring all DHB facilities and vehicles are smokefree, including vape-free.
- Supporting DHB staff, contractors, and patients to quit smoking.
- Its workforce being smokefree by 2025.
- Supporting vaping as a harm reduction tool through an appropriately flexible and upgradable regulatory regime that avoids unintended harms and risks.

References and further information

1. Ministry of Health (2019) Tobacco Control: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/tobacco-control/smokefree-aotearoa-2025>
2. Health Promotion Agency (2018) Smokefree: Facts and Figures: www.smokefree.org.nz
3. BPAC (2013) Encouraging smoke-free pregnancies: the role of primary care. Best Practice Journal (50) <https://bpac.org.nz/BPJ/2013/February/smoke-free-pregnancies.aspx>
4. Harris et al (2013) Parental smoking during pregnancy and risk of overweight and obesity in the daughter. International Journal of Obesity; 37 (10).
5. Toi Te Ora (2019) Smokefree: <https://www.toiteora.govt.nz/tobacco>
6. Health Promotion Agency (2019) Local help to stop smoking: <https://www.smokefree.org.nz/help-advice/stop-smoking-services>
7. Ministry of Health (2018) Vaping and Smokeless tobacco: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/tobacco-control/vaping-and-smokeless-tobacco>
8. NZMA (2017) Position Statement Smokefree Aotearoa 2025: https://www.nzma.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/57042/Smokefree-New-Zealand-Position-Statement-July-2017-FINAL.-docx.pdf

Adopted by: the Bay of Plenty District Health Board at its 19 June 2019 meeting.

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