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**Hauora
Taiwhenua**
Rural Health
Network

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024

Welcome from Dr Grant Davidson, Chief Executive



Kia ora tātou

I am writing this as the coalition Government have just repealed the Pae Ora legislation and disestablished Te Aka Whai Ora and the Smokefree legislation under urgency. Concurrently, most Government departments have been given the mandate to reduce their spending by a minimum of 6.5% and also reduce spending on consultants. The number of redundancies in the government and private sector companies is increasing because of this. And last night we learnt that Newshub is to stop operating in June reducing our news reporting to one source. Turbulent times.

We wait with expectation for the next phase of the mahi of this new government and we expect/hope that to be a building phase. We want to learn what the plans are to move the country forward and improve health, education, and

equity outcomes across the country. We look forward to any announcements that Minister Reti is able to provide at our national conference in early April. The good news is the establishment of the Rural Team within Te Whatu Ora / Health New Zealand, and the appointments of people to permanent positions across that organisation so that a programme of work can start. Our Board recently met with Martin Hefford, Director Living Well National Commissioning, along with Rachel Pearce Co-Director Rural Commissioning. Both showed a real desire to improve the 'lot' of primary care, with Rachel's focus being on the subset of rural primary care. We have set up some communication structures and will work closely with them both to make the best of any initiatives set by the new government.

I know that many of you have been concerned with the renewal process for the ACC Rural GP Contracts. I have heard of some chatter on social media sites where people are suggesting that the process is being set up to make it hard for practices to apply, hard to comply with the conditions, and not be funded at appropriate levels. We have worked closely with ACC since learning of this contract renewal process prior to Christmas and tried to keep all rural practices up to speed with the process that is being used and how best to prepare for the contract tender on the GETS website. ACC have been extremely responsive to any questions we have asked and also to questions that practices ask through the GETS Tender Q&A function that has now closed. ACC is a Government Department and is subject to all-of-government requirements for tender processes such as this. They may seem burdensome, clumsy, and bureaucratic – but it is the process that must be used for transparency and audit in the government system. We believe it is not, in any way, being set up to work against rural general practices. We encourage you to utilise the process, complete all of the forms, supply all of the required information and submit in advance of the close of date Friday March 8th at 2pm.

Working with our Rural General Practice Chapter, we have compiled a list of Questions and Answers for the ACC Rural Contract for those still completing the various forms and hope these may be of help. You can access them by clicking on the link below.

On a positive note, we have just had our first quarterly update from the team running the Ka Ora rural telehealth service. The results so far are incredibly positive with 90 practices now active users of the service. Over the summer period, Ka Ora managed close to 3000 individual callers with 80% being resolved online, 15% referred to a face-to-face GP consult and a further 5% sent straight to emergency services through 111. This service has so far provided great support for rural practices and those visiting rural areas over the frantic summer holiday period. We look forward to working with Ka Ora to further promote and improve the service.

We really look forward to seeing you at the National Rural Health Conference at Tākina Conference Centre in Wellington on April 5/6. We have an amazing range of speakers and presentations ready to go. We have also arranged a great set of activities for spouses and children to take part in while the

conference is on to make this a family-friendly event for all.

Ngā mihi nui

Dr Grant Davidson

Chief Executive

Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network

Rural General Practice ACC Contract Questions

Membership

Membership Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our Membership Satisfaction Survey.

It is only through your feedback that we can enhance the quality of our services to better meet your needs.

As was advertised, by completing this survey, members went into the draw to win one of two Hauora Taiwhenua puffer vests from Macpac!

Congratulations to Brooke Williams and Sarah Hewitt!

A reminder that our HTRHN App has a range of discounts from Macpac, Hertz, Bunnings, Noel Leeming and many other great retailers.

If you have any questions or concerns about our membership services, please contact Ingrid Busby, GM Membership Services:
ingrid.busby@htrhn.org.nz

A Note from the Board - Debi Lawry

Kia ora tātou

I have had the privilege of being a member of the Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network Board since 2022 when this organisation was established. I am also a member of the HTRHN Finance Audit Risk Committee. Prior to the formation of HTRHN, I was a member of the executive committee of the Rural Hospital Network since 2009 and was their



representative on the organising committee of the Rural Health conferences for several years. I also helped establish Rural Nurses NZ, which has now become the Rural Nurses Chapter of HTRHN. I remain on its executive committee.

My journey to rural health awareness began halfway through my career. I grew up in Auckland and became a nurse in the mid to late 1970s. I travelled around the world, where I discovered Aotearoa New Zealand was the place that held my heart. Returning to Auckland I worked in the emerging speciality of neonatal intensive care.

This led to an interest in the wider whānau influence on neonatal outcomes, particularly the role of the mother. I did my midwifery training in Auckland. I eventually returned to neonatal nursing where I became a clinical nurse consultant and completed a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner programme – that preceded our current Nurse Practitioner scope of practice.

My husband is a South Island lad and was keen to return to his childhood haunts in Wanaka, Central Otago. We eventually moved to Ōtepoti Dunedin where I worked as a Director of Nursing for the Southern DHB. Southern DHB provided services to the largest rural region in the country. Thus began my exposure to the challenges faced by people living rurally in Aotearoa New Zealand. Within 5 years we moved to Central Otago and from 2007 to 2020 I was Director of Nursing at Dunstan Hospital in Clyde, Central Otago.

One of the first lessons I learned was that generalists have to have a vast skill base! **Rural** generalists develop even more skills, as they often have no backup nearby. My respect for the nurses, doctors, allied health, radiology staff, administration team and hospital services support (Kitchen staff/cleaners/groundsman) was immense. The teamwork was honest and respectful, and the focus was always on providing the best possible care to the patient and the community.

This part of Aotearoa New Zealand is deemed to be affluent, and indeed some residents are. However, most people have limited resources, there is scarce affordable housing stock, limited access to after-hours primary and emergency care and the base hospital is a three-plus hour drive in frequently challenging weather conditions. Add to this the rapidly increasing population, the impact of peak tourism on the Queenstown Lakes / Central Otago region and the comparative lack of resources – it put immense pressure on health services.

Despite these hurdles, the team at Dunstan constantly strove to improve health for their community. I was privileged to be part of this team. I believed that rural hospital and district nurses had an amazing skill set, but they needed advocacy to ensure their voices were heard and needs identified. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to provide leadership and advocacy for some of our rural nurses to the Southern DHB. Many Dunstan nurses undertook post-graduate education, and all nurses benefitted from the Mobile Health Education

programme. This enhanced the health services we provided to our patients. Working with colleagues who were leading rural academia helped us realise some of our projects could have a wider positive application for rural health across the mōtu. This provided opportunities for career development for our healthcare team.

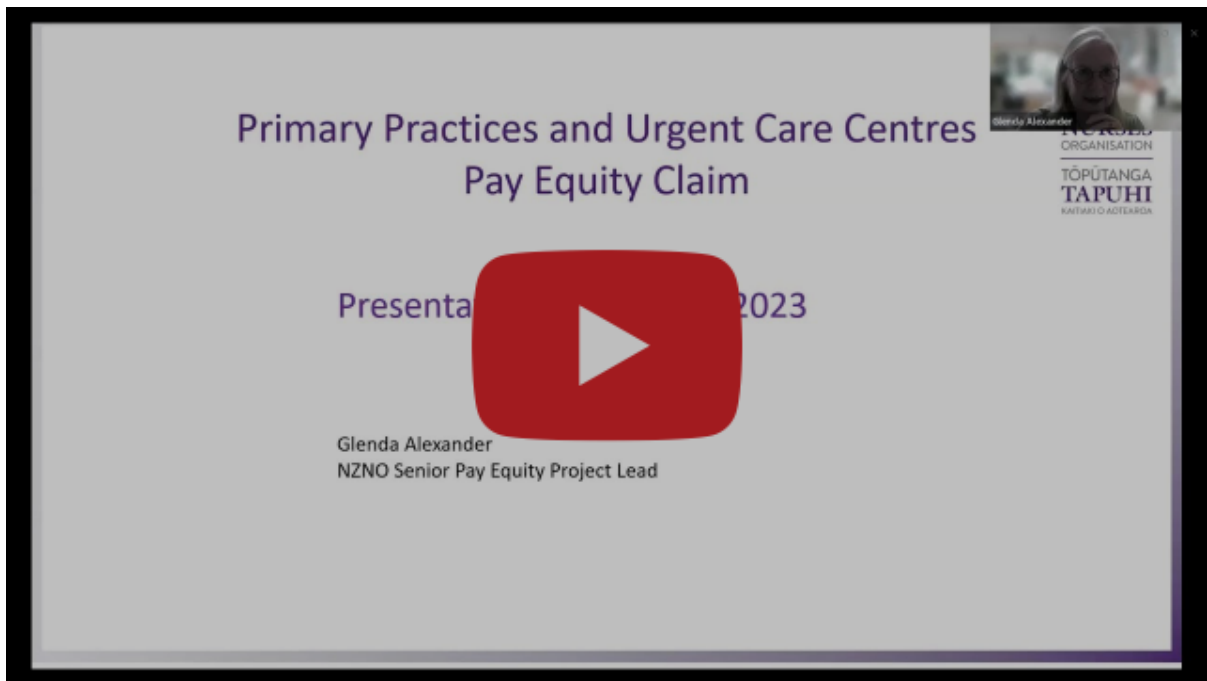
I was seconded to the Chief Executive role at Dunstan Hospital following the resignation of the previous 'boss'. I enjoyed the challenge of leading the wider health team for six months. During this time, I was involved in bringing after hours primary care for Cromwell and Alexandra 'inhouse' – plus I raised funding for a replacement CT scanner. Closer liaison with the Board of Dunstan Hospital helped me differentiate between operational and governance issues.

In 2020 I returned to Southern DHB as the Rural Services Manager. Within 6 weeks of starting my new role, which included managing Lakes District Hospital in Queenstown, COVID struck. Baptism by fire is an understatement. Despite the challenges, it was the teamwork across the rural sector that enabled us to survive. I also spent some of this time as Acting Chief Executive of Waitaki Health Services in Oamaru. I loved this challenge. Another significant project I led was establishing a Southern DHB-run Primary Maternity facility in Central Otago when the contract with the existing provider ended.

"Performance punishment" and rural reality led to my decision to retire in 2022. This coincided with my husband and I selling the vineyard we had established in Tarras. This transition has enabled me to reflect on the amazingly positive impact that rural hospitals and primary care have on the sustainability of the community. I believe passionately in the right of rural people to have equitable health outcomes to the rest of the country. I believe rural health professionals have a unique place in their communities. They deserve to have the same pay and conditions as their urban colleagues. They should have the resources to provide the healthcare their community deserves. Their contribution to growing the future rural workforce should be recognised and supported. Their ability to practice 'generalism' should be applauded – as this is the skill set required in many parts of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be a Board member of Hauora Taiwhenua. I believe HTRHN provides a unique opportunity to support health service provision throughout rural Aotearoa, to facilitate access to information and research for rural health professionals and to provide 'the rural voice' to government as we work towards our goal of healthy and thriving rural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kia tipu matomato ngā hapori i Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi nui
Debi Lawry



Advocacy

Understanding the process and have your questions answered around the: Nurse Primary Practices and Urgent Care Centres Pay Equity Claim.

Last year NZNO succeeded in a pay equity claim against Te Whatu Ora to raise the pay rates of nurses, based on gender discrimination, to the same rates as those professions that have similar responsibilities but are male-dominated. Those increases were then passed on to the nurses employed by Te Whatu Ora through payments by the Government to fund those increases.

Late last year NZNO lodged a pay equity claim against a group of named primary care and urgent care practices as a means to ensure all nurses carrying out equivalent duties, whoever their employer, gets paid a similar amount across New Zealand. There is currently a lack of clear information about what this equity claim will mean, who will be included, what the process will be and what the financial implications will be if it succeeds.

Find above the webinar that took place on February 8th, where Glenda Alexander from NZNO, who is leading the pay equity claim, presented on this topic and answered questions and concerns that resulted.

Our Rural Clinical Voice

Clinical Director Update: Dr Jeremy Webber

Kia ora koutou



As I write this, I reflect on the anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle, the loss of life, and the upheaval of community across the region. Personally, I am thankful to be reinstated in our home, yet continue to get reminders as silt continues to creep out from crevices long since cleaned, and neighbours still to start on their own rebuilds.

I look forward to the year ahead and being able to build on the experiences and challenges of the last 12 months. In every difficulty, there is opportunity, and everywhere we look there is plenty of mahi to do.

Fresh commitment from the new Government around increasing medical graduates with a focus on rural is encouraging and the challenge for us as a rural community is to welcome, teach and inspire those developing clinicians, acknowledging this too takes effort, time and resources from our side.

Nationally, we have been asked to step up and contribute to our rural voice so please consider putting your hand up:

- Clinical Networks – cardiac, renal, trauma and stroke are underway and thanks to those rural voices already involved. Next are Critical Care, Eye Health, Radiology and Infection Services. **Please get in touch with me if you want to be involved or have questions about contributing:** jeremy.webber@htrhn.org.nz
- Rural Clinical Advisors – part-time regional positions with Te Whatu Ora to guide the future of health.

The other highlight approaching is the rural conference in April with a fantastic program of speakers and workshops, but most importantly the opportunity to connect with you all *konahi ki te kanohi*. Please chew my ear with your thoughts or sit down for a cup of tea. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ngā mihi nui
Dr Jeremy Webber
Clinical Director Rural Health

Trauma National Clinical Network: Terms of Reference

Advocacy

Hauora Taiwhenua Applauds Coalition Government's Progress in Developing a Third New Zealand Medical School Focusing on Producing Rural Doctors

14 February 2024

Hauora Taiwhenua expresses its support for the Government's signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Waikato to establish a third medical school focussing on developing rural doctors.

"We are pleased to witness this important progression in the establishment of a third New Zealand medical school with a unique focus on solving the rural medical workforce issues," stated Dr Fiona Bolden, Chair, Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network.

"The current state of the rural health workforce in New Zealand is under extreme pressure, and we commend the Government for taking proactive measures to address this critical issue by training focussed on graduates willing to work rurally."

The need for diverse strategies, both short-term and long-term, is critical to combating the challenges facing the rural health workforce. Hauora Taiwhenua recognises the importance of initiatives, such as a new medical school, in producing rural doctors and other essential rural health professionals.

Dr Grant Davidson, CE of Hauora Taiwhenua comments, *"We have been advocating for a long time to introduce innovative training, based on overseas research, that proves that training rural people, in rural areas using rural health professionals, will produce graduates that are much more likely to stay practicing in those rural communities."*

"It is pleasing to see the plan to establish a third medical school supporting this, with a programme that will be focussed on producing rural doctors and other rural health professionals."

Hauora Taiwhenua looks forward to collaborating closely with the University of Waikato as well as both existing medical schools at the University of Auckland and the University of Otago. Recently, both Auckland and Otago received additional funded medical school placements along with funding to expand programmes involving immersion training in rural communities.

"We eagerly anticipate working alongside the University of Waikato and our colleagues at the existing medical schools to train as many graduates to work in rural areas as possible," Dr Davidson added.

"Our collective efforts strive to empower our rural communities by ensuring they have access to high-quality healthcare services delivered by professionals who understand and are committed to rural values and needs."

LAST DAY FOR EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION!



National
Rural Health
Conference
2024

REGISTRATION FEES

HAUORA TAIWHENUA MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT

EARLY BIRD PRICES: CLOSES 29 FEBRUARY 2024

REGISTRATION TYPE	HAUORA TAIWHENUA MEMBER	NON HAUORA TAIWHENUA MEMBER
General Practitioner/Rural Hospital Doctor	\$735	\$895
Nurse Practitioner	\$580	\$685
*Other Health Professional	\$480	\$580

* Other Health Professional includes Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health, Paramedics, Practice Managers, House Officers, Registrars, PGY 1, 2 & 3 and GPEP/RHM.

www.nationalruralhealthconference.org.nz

The National Rural Health Conference is set to convene on April 5-6, 2024, in Wellington, promising insightful discussions on all facets of rural health.

Early bird registration is set TODAY, Thursday 29th February, so register now to make the most of this offer! As a Hauora Taiwhenua Member, you are able to receive a discounted price for your registration as indicated above.

Distinguished keynote speakers will discuss crucial aspects of the field, including Dr Cath Cosgrave, focusing on building a robust rural health workforce; John Macaskill-Smith, exploring a technological future for rural health; A/Prof Matire Harwood, offering a Te Ao Māori perspective on health leadership; and Dr Ratu Mataira, delving into global climate change solutions from the Ngauranga Gorge.

Award-winning journalist and mental health advocate, Jehan Casinader,

will also share his journey in a special keynote.

Find the link to register below.

Conference 2024 Registration



[Conference](#)

Peter Snow Memorial Award 2023 - Nominations Now Open

Pictured above: 2022 Peter Snow Award winner, Branko Sijnja

Nominations are now open for the Peter Snow Memorial Award 2023. The Peter Snow Memorial Award celebrates Peter Snow's contribution to rural communities as well as recognising an individual for their outstanding contribution to rural health in either service, health research or innovation.

An individual can be nominated for either an **Innovation or Service** or a **Research Project** related to rural health in New Zealand.

The award will be presented at the National Rural Health Conference in April 2024, with it expected that the recipient of the award will present a paper at a future conference based on their project or service.

Click the button below for the nomination form, or for further information

on how to nominate, head to our website link
here: <https://htrhn.org.nz/peter-snow-memorial-award/>

Previous Recipients

2022	Branko Sijnja	Service
2021	Grahame Jelley	Service
2020	Tania Kemp	Service
2019	John Burton	Service
2018	Kieth Buswell	Service
2017	Chris Henry	Innovation and Service
	Andrea Judd	Innovation and Service
2016	Leonie Howie	Service
	Ivan Howie	Service
2015	Kati Blattner	Service and Research
2014	Kim Gosman	Service
	Janne Bills	Service
2013	Robin Steed	Service
	Graeme Fenton	Service
2012	Kirsty Murrell-McMillan	Service
2011	Martin London	Service
2010	Tom Malloy	Service
2009	Garry Nixon	Service and Research
2008	Jean Ross	Research
	Pat Farry	Research
2007	Ron James	Research

Nomination Form

Rural Communities

Waitangi Day Celebrations

Rhoena Davis, HTRHN Board Member



Waitangi Day is held on February 6th to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a foundation document signed by British colonists and Māori Chiefs in 1840 that establishes and guides the relationship between New Zealand's indigenous population and the government.

This year, Waitangi Day was celebrated by our Nation in many ways, with approximately 35,000 people attending the Waitangi Treaty Grounds to take part in the festivities.



As the sun rose this morning, people gathered at Te Whare Rūnanga for the service led by Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro. A dawn ceremony began the day, with government officials in attendance, as well as many who wanted to welcome in the day with karakia.

The annual waka pageant welcomed many waka to share and showcase their skills within the Bay of Islands.

The biggest hīkoi protest in recent years, which travelled from Te Rerenga Wairua Cape Rēinga, Waiomio and then onto Waitangi. The protest was intended as a symbol of unity in which both Māori and non-Māori gathered to oppose the policies declared by the coalition government.



Our passion for Primary Health Care - Rural health – Māori health and reducing inequities for vulnerable rural communities – Starting well, living well and being well. Our team focal point is what matters to whānau, which drives everything we do. Waitangi celebrations provided the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful weather – network with many community groups and appreciate the entertainment provided by the Ngāti Hine Health Trust.



The Waitangi celebrations are a time of whānaungatanga and whānau fun, with food stalls and New Zealand artists performing. However, some people were expecting a more tense atmosphere. We were pleasantly surprised that there were no outbursts of violence or any contentious moments. It was a pleasant

day that was enjoyed by our primary care teams who held stores on the Waitangi grounds. With future major hui and meetings taking place over the next few months, the Government should be prepared for Māori to make their opposition to its policies heard.

Rural Nurses New Zealand Chapter

Chapter Profile - Stacy Thwaites - Rural Nurses New Zealand Chapter Chair



Hi, my name is Stacy and I'm a Rural District Nurse in my hometown, working in a small team of 4. We provide specialist nursing care to patients in our clinic and in their homes - I have been in my role for five years and I plan to continue in this role for the majority of my career. If I were to change jobs - then I would like to become a rural nurse educator. I'm most proud of rural healthcare workers for their Kiwi ingenuity, "can do" attitude and ability to stand tall in the face of adversity. In 2023, I studied a Rural Nursing paper at the University of Otago and became co-chair of the Executive Committee Rural Nurses New Zealand Chapter at Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network. My career goal is to build on my leadership skills – this semester I am studying a leadership and management paper through the post-graduate nursing programme at the University of Otago.

I am attending the upcoming National Rural Health Conference in Wellington from 5-6 April 2024. My passion is rural professional development, and this is the session I am most looking forward to attending. I also focus on promoting resilience in our team so I'm looking

forward to the fostering resilience seminar. At our chapter meetings, I aim to include upcoming education opportunities and wellbeing content. Outside of nursing, I spend most of my time entertaining our golden retriever puppy Oakley and calico cat Bailey (they occasionally interrupt our Zoom meetings). I'm looking forward to spending 2024 with the members of Hauora Taiwhenua and wish everyone a happy start to the year.

OPEN DAY

Bridging distances for better health

For many individuals, especially vulnerable or ill patients, travelling long distances to access health services poses a significant barrier, often resulting in suboptimal health outcomes. Mobile health services have emerged as a safe and efficient solution to bridge this gap.

Discover first-hand how mobile health units complement and enhance traditional health facilities, ensuring accessible and equitable healthcare services for regional and rural areas while also providing a tool to address high demand in urban areas.

Join us for an exclusive opportunity to tour these state-of-the-art mobile units, connect with our teams, ask questions, and discover their positive impacts on individuals, whānau and communities across the country.

Parliament Buildings,
1 Museum Street, Pipitea,
Wellington
Monday 6 May, 7am – 6pm



scan here
for more
information

mobilehealth.co.nz/parliament24



Te Hauora o Turanganui a Kiwa Ltd

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Artificial Limb Service
Orthotic Service



In the News

**Securing Sustainable General Practice in Aotearoa:
Solutions to Reverse the Crisis**

Please find the attached report and media release from GPNZ

on securing sustainable general practice in Aotearoa. The report was developed with input from across our network and sets out potential solutions to the current challenges facing general practice, following independent analysis by Sapere.

A report detailing solutions for sustainable general practice has been released today by General Practice New Zealand (GPNZ).

“General practice sits at the heart of primary and community care. If it fails, the health system fails.” says Porirua-based Specialist General Practitioner and Chair of GPNZ, Dr Bryan Betty. Delivering 20+ million encounters a year, general practice provides continuous, comprehensive, coordinated care that is proven to reduce the need for hospitalisations and urgent care, and reduce mortality.

GPNZ worked with Sapere, well known for its work in the New Zealand health system and specifically general practice, along with the wealth of expertise within its member network to develop a range of solutions that are essential to sustainable general practice and a world-leading health system.

“We’re in a desperate and growing crisis. People are increasingly unable to access the care they need when they need it, and that is felt most sharply by people who need support the most,” says Dr Betty.

“These solutions will enable practices not just to recover but to thrive, delivering the kind of care they desperately want to provide to their communities.”

The solutions fall into a few key and interdependent themes: funding; complexity; models of care; rural general practice; workforce; integration; and primary care development and structures.

“Innovation, changes to the model of care, flexible service delivery - these are key parts of our vision of modern general practice. Our solutions are geared to delivering this,” adds Dr Betty.

“In essence we need that long-awaited new funding model – one that will tackle inequity and truly recognise all drivers of demand and complexity. We also need initiatives to expand, develop and truly value a multi-disciplinary primary care workforce, and support for technology as an enabler.”

The recommendations also place importance on the structures in place that strengthen primary and community care, with services planned around whānau and communities and a collective focus on illness prevention, health promotion and ensuring equitable access to timely,

high-quality care and support.

Beyond stabilisation of core services, there is a wider goal – expanding and developing primary care to deliver fully on the promise of Pae Ora, delivering increased wellbeing and equity for all New Zealanders.

“Achieving these things requires a level of sustained investment that has never been available to primary care providers under any government.”

Sustainable General Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand 2024

Rural Health Research & Education

Hauora Taiwhenua Emerging Researcher and Educator Awards

With the National Rural Health Conference fast approaching, the Research & Education Chapter of Hauora Taiwhenua are calling for nominations and applications for the inaugural round of the Emerging Rural Researcher and Educator Awards. The awards recognise Hauora Taiwhenua members who are positively impacting rural communities, rural health systems and/or rural workforces.

The winner of the Emerging Researcher Award will receive a 12-month membership to Research Accelerator, valued at NZD\$479. Research Accelerator is a community of practice for qualitative and mixed methods researchers. Members are primarily doctoral candidates and early career researchers and are cross-disciplinary from a range of universities, government departments and NGOs. The community meets regularly for daily virtual co-working sessions, quarterly retreats, monthly live Q&A and an annual conference. In addition to the live sessions offered, there is an extensive course library with over 120 hours of video content, covering qualitative data analysis, statistics, research writing, NVivo, SPSS, research productivity tools, and more. Full details of the membership can be viewed at: <https://www.researchaccelerator.nz/bundles/membership>.

The winner of the Emerging Educator Award will be supported in their professional development through a tailored prize that could include mentorship or attendance at a suitable event.

To apply for the award(s) please download the application form(s) below.

Candidates wishing to be considered must be members of Hauora Taiwhenua, and can self-apply or be nominated.

Applications are to be submitted by email to amanda.dunlop-storey@htrhn.org.nz by no later than **Friday 8 March 2024**.

The winner will be announced at the National Rural Health Conference 2024.

Emerging Rural Researcher Award Application

Emerging Rural Educator Award Application

Cyclone Gabrielle

Resilience Rising: Dr Jeremy Webber's Reflections on Cyclone Gabrielle, One Year Later

As we mark the first anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle, we sat down with our own Dr Jeremy Webber about how life has progressed and the challenges that still lie ahead faced by the community post-Cyclone Gabrielle. Through his experiences and perspectives, he speaks about the resilience of both individuals and communities in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

What significant changes have occurred within the community?

The importance of having a 'grab bag' ready has gone beyond being just a good idea and has become a necessity. Although some people have moved on and are now living in newly built homes, there are still many communities with land, buildings, and families waiting for a decision about their future. This serves as a reminder that being prepared is crucial.

How has the disaster affected or improved access and equity to health care?

The disaster and the focus on the region at the time, especially the access to rural areas, was important as it highlighted the inequality and gaps in healthcare access. However, a year has passed, and our challenge now is to ensure that we maintain our focus and guarantee that the lessons we learned lead to progress in these areas, not just remain as memories.

Has rural access been addressed with intent?

Local and regional infrastructure continues to be worked through and will require ongoing long-term planning, which is essential for better access to healthcare services. It is reassuring to see disaster planning feature more prominently in national projects like the current aeromedical review.

Are there any notable health trends emerging in the aftermath of the

disaster?

We're noticing that patients are becoming more adaptable and accepting when it comes to disruptions in healthcare services. However, we need to be mindful as a clinical community that this doesn't slip into accepting poorer outcomes in the long run.

How have local healthcare facilities adapted their services to accommodate the changing needs of the community post-disaster?

With the increasingly unpredictable nature of such events, reliable road access and services are no longer taken for granted. This has made facilities adapt and incorporate backup plans into their daily routines, making it a common practice to initiate a plan B or C with the potential indication of disruption. The importance of having these contingency plans cannot be overstated, as they ensure that businesses can continue to function even in the face of unexpected challenges.

What does resilience mean to the community now?

Resilience now means more than just bouncing back from tough times; it's about maintaining hope and solidarity during adversity. In some respects, there is a degree of confidence around managing through disaster knowing the sun will still rise in the morning despite the challenges faced at a point in time.

Innovation

Applications open for 2025 General Practice and Rural Hospital Medicine Training

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners has opened applications for doctors wanting to specialise in general practice (GPEP) and/or rural hospital medicine (RHM), starting in January 2025.

The two qualifications, which can be undertaken separately, or together to obtain Dual Fellowship, are a mix of clinical and academic post-graduate training for people who already have a medical degree.

Dr Samantha Murton, Wellington GP and President of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners says, "We need to train more specialist general practitioners and rural hospital doctors who can continue to provide our high standard of comprehensive and equitable healthcare to our diverse population.

"We wholeheartedly welcome applications from doctors wanting to specialise in a field that delivers a meaningful difference to the health of our people right across the motu.

"General practice and rural hospital medicine is a vibrant and challenging profession. No two days, and no two patients are the same. If you want to

form long-lasting connections with your patients while working through complex yet rewarding challenges in helping them to manage their health, come and join us," she said.

Applications to both programmes can be made online before 12pm Monday 8 April 2024.

Apply for the General Practice Education Programme (GPEP)

Apply for the Rural Hospital Medicine Training Programme (RHM)

NZLocums & NZMedJobs

NZLocums February Orientation

Getting the best introduction to New Zealand's health system

Held monthly in our Wellington Office, and virtually, our orientation course is the first step into the New Zealand health system for international doctors.

We are keeping the ball rolling with the second orientation of the year with a mix of both in-person and virtual GPs attending.

Successfully putting another seven General Practitioners across New Zealand from our January orientation, our GPs have had a change of scenery from places such as the USA, Spain, Belgium and Singapore now to, Waihi, Renwick, Whangamatā, Amberley, Richmond and Hastings!

Our three-day course introduces them and future GPs to New Zealand's health system while also covering ACC, Work and Income, Pharmac, MedTech 32 training and sessions on Māori history and health.

Orientation is also a great networking opportunity for newly arrived international doctors to meet and share experiences.

NZLocums' Orientation course is tailor-made for internationally trained GPs and Practice Nurses. The course is endorsed by the Royal New Zealand College of GPs for up to 17.5 credits CME.

For more information, email: orientation@nzlocums.com or visit

University of Otago

Rural New Zealanders less likely to be admitted to hospital – study finds

Despite having poorer health outcomes than their urban counterparts, rural New Zealanders are considerably less likely to be admitted to hospital, a University of Otago-led study has found.

Published in the *New Zealand Medical Journal*, it is the first time large rural-urban differences have been demonstrated in utilisation of hospital services in the country.

Lead author Professor Garry Nixon, Head of Rural Section in Otago's Department of General Practice and Rural Health, says the results are surprising given rural New Zealanders have poorer health outcomes, including higher preventable mortality rates.

“The problem is even greater for our most remote communities.

“Despite the poorest health outcomes, highest levels of socioeconomic deprivation and the highest proportion of Māori residents, these areas have the lowest hospital admission rates and lowest utilisation of other hospital services such as emergency departments, specialist clinics and allied health services,” he says.

The findings also go against the pattern seen in similar countries – in Australia and Canada, the poorer health status and lack of access to primary care services results in higher hospital admissions for residents of rural areas.

“It's unclear why this is not also the case in New Zealand, raising the possibility of poorer access to hospital services for rural communities.”

The study used hospitalisation, allied health, emergency department and specialist outpatient data from 2014 to 2018, along with Census information, to calculate hospital utilisation rates for residents in the two urban and three rural categories.

The researchers found, overall, regional centres had the highest hospitalisation rates, and rural areas the lowest.

Relative to their urban peers, rural people had lower all-cause, cardiovascular, mental health, and ambulatory sensitive hospitalisation

rates.

Those living in the most remote communities had the lowest rates of specialist outpatient and emergency department attendance, an effect that was accentuated for Māori.

Professor Nixon believes there needs to be better monitoring of healthcare utilisation to help reduce these inequities.

“This is not only between regions as has been the case in the past – like the post code lottery – but also between neighbouring rural and urban areas. Accurate data is needed to provide evidence for policy and health service planning.”

He believes the important role of rural hospitals have in reducing these disparities also needs to be acknowledged.

“In recent decades they have received little attention by the larger health service and are in need of specific strategy and funding models that ensure their sustainability,” he says.

*In addition to utilisation of hospital services, the researchers believe primary care access and utilisation are an important part of the rural-urban equity puzzle. Since New Zealand currently lacks a nationally consistent primary care dataset, the researchers plan to explore this when data is available.

Publication details:

Rural–urban variation in the utilisation of publicly funded healthcare services: an age-stratified population-level observational study

Garry Nixon, Gabrielle Davie, Jesse Whitehead, Rory Michael Miller, Brandon de Graaf, Talis Liepins, Ross Lawrenson, Sue Crengle

New Zealand Medical Journal (23 February, 2024 edition)

READ THE FULL STUDY HERE

A promotional graphic for 'Smoko on Us'. The top half features a dark green background with the text 'Smoko on Us' in a white, cursive font. To the left, there is a circular image of a golden-brown pie on a wooden board. Overlaid on this image are white line-art icons of a coffee cup, a sandwich, and a cupcake. The bottom half of the graphic has a light beige background with text in dark green and black. The text reads: 'WE'RE KEEN TO SHOUT YOU AND YOUR WORKMATES SMOKO THIS SUMMER.' followed by 'Submit a photo of your team mates out there doing the mahi in your rural industry to be into win a weekly smoko shout worth up to \$200*.' and 'Entries to Celia.Coles@ruralsupport.org.nz or send us a message through to our Facebook page to enter. Weekly winners announced every Friday.' The Rural Support Northland logo is in the bottom left corner, and '*Ts and Cs apply' is in the bottom right.

Smoko on Us

WE'RE KEEN TO SHOUT YOU AND YOUR WORKMATES SMOKO THIS SUMMER.

Submit a photo of your team mates out there doing the mahi in your rural industry to be into win a weekly smoko shout worth up to \$200*.

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Rural Support
NORTHLAND

Innovation

Calling all Northland Health Professionals - Rural Support Trust Northland

Rural Support Trust Northland are keen to reward health professionals in Northland for all their hard mahi with a morning tea shout.

Entries are now open to go into the draw for a weekly 'Smoko on us', see entry details above.

Innovation

College of GPs | Funding round opens for research benefitting general practice

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners supports research and education that benefits general practice, rural general practice and rural hospital medicine through three funding rounds each year.

Applications are welcomed from anyone who is undertaking research in this field. You do not have to be a doctor or a member of the College to apply. Grants are typically in the range of \$5,000 - \$20,000 for individual applications although up to \$40,000 can be awarded.

The College's Research and Education Committee (REC) provides financial support to those conducting research or education projects and is looking for applications that reflect the five key areas of the College's Statement of Strategic intent (Te Rautaki):

- Supporting our members
- Becoming a contemporary and sustainable organisation
- Improving health equity in New Zealand
- Education excellence
- Quality general practices.

Previous successful applications have included research into exploring inequity in access to medications for type 2 diabetes, rural placements of health professionals, capitation fees, and identifying threshold concepts to contribute to enhanced general practice teaching and learning.

Applications close on Tuesday 12 March 2024 and will be considered by the College's Research and Education Committee (REC).

More information, including guidelines, an application form, and contact information for questions can be found online at <https://www.rnzcgp.org.nz/our-voice/fund-your-research/>



Know your Mindset. Lead the Recovery.

Training for rural leaders building back.



Innovation

Know your Mindset. Lead the Recovery

Training for rural leaders building back.

Find below for key information and a link to register from Agri-Women's Development Trust about their programme, Know your Mindset. Lead the Recovery - a short, online programme supporting food & fibre leaders to manage the multiple pressures of leadership in times of challenge.

Leading rural people through adversity is rewarding - but can be tough and sometimes lonely.

Designed for men and women leading others across farms, orchards, agribusinesses and rural professional services - you'll connect with others to face common leadership wellbeing issues together.

You'll learn how stress affects your ability to plan and act effectively, gain practical tools to notice stress in others and learn how to lead people through crisis.

Running online across two evenings, 'Know your Mindset. Lead the Recovery' is presented by a registered Clinical Psychologist and Chartered Organisational Psychologist, alongside AWDT facilitators who lead breakout spaces where participants connect to share stories and support each other. Come and join us.

Know your Mindset. Lead the Recovery

Innovation

Skin Cancer Symposiums Introduction to Dermatoscopy 2024

Skin Cancer Symposiums are delighted to invite you to the upcoming course Introduction to Dermatoscopy and Certificate of Skin Cancer Management held at the state-of-the-art Whenua Pupuke Clinical Centre at North Shore Hospital, Auckland on 16th / 17th March 2024. Delegates can enrol for either or both days. The courses have been accredited by the Royal NZ College of GPs.

Date: 16th March & 17th March 2024

Time: 08.15 am – 5.00 pm

Venue: Whenua Pupuke Clinical Skills Centre, North Shore Hospital, Auckland

The Introduction to Dermatoscopy is designed to introduce the skill of dermatoscopy to beginners and upskill intermediates. Importantly, dermatoscopy is now recognized by the Australasian Melanoma guidelines as a grade A recommendation for all involved in the management of pigmented skin lesions. Professor Cliff Rosendahl from the University of Queensland has published extensively and is a world leader in the study of Dermatoscopy. He is a dynamic presenter who uses wit, and a sincere passion in his wish to pass on to colleagues the lifesaving skills and knowledge in Dermatoscopy.

To register or for further information, please go to:
www.skincancersymposiums.com

Leaning on Fence Posts

New Content Available on Leaning on Fence Posts

A change of location for LOFP



LOFP has moved to <https://rhrn.nz/lofp> - please update your bookmarks! You will notice a different layout, but the grassroots content remains the same and subscribers will continue to receive email notifications when there are new posts. We are happy to receive rural health news, views, research articles, conference/webinar/CPD opportunities for posting. Email rhrn@otago.ac.nz with your suggested content

Check out the latest content on the University of Otago's Leaning on Fence Posts Blog via the button below.

[READ MORE](#)



**Hauora
Taiwhenua**
Rural Health
Network



**NZLocums
& NZMedJobs**

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