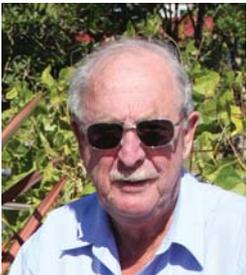


REPORT TO THE community

AUTUMN 2013

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Community dietician Jennifer Brand makes you say "mmm" *back page*

Healthy West Coast
Te Hauora o Tatou – The Health of Us All





West Coast District Health Board chief executive David Meates answers some questions from the community.

When will we get a new hospital in Greymouth and better facilities in Buller?

Late last year, the Government established a Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre (IFHC) Redevelopment Partnership Group. This year, the group will develop a detailed business case for facilities redevelopment at Grey Base Hospital. They will also review the single-stage business case for the Buller facility and provide advice on how to progress. We know that the partnership group is working very hard to be clear about what services need to be delivered, by whom, and out of which facilities. We are committed to keeping the community informed once the partnership group provides direction.

Why is the Canterbury District Health Board getting involved in healthcare on the Coast?

One way to ensure Coasters keep receiving excellent healthcare services close to home is for the West Coast District Health Board (DHB) to continue providing Transalpine Health Services in partnership with the Canterbury DHB. Clinicians work for both health boards, and innovative approaches to health care, such as the use of telemedicine – where health professionals use high-definition video links to consult with specialists in Christchurch – mean fewer people need to travel to Christchurch.

There are currently more than 10 Transalpine Health Services successfully operating between Canterbury and West Coast DHBs.

Our Transalpine Health Services partnership with Canterbury is resolving one of the long-term issues for the West Coast – the difficulty of attracting and retaining specialists and surgeons. In the past this had sometimes meant services were patchy, could not be guaranteed, or were met by the huge expense of flying in locum surgeons from other distant centres and even overseas, another practice that was simply unsustainable economically.

Why can't I get looked after on the Coast for all health issues?

For the past four years, around a third* of all elective surgery for Coasters, has been done outside the Coast, the vast majority of this in Canterbury. Further, our more complex surgery takes place in Canterbury. The reality is that some West Coasters will always have to travel to Christchurch or beyond, simply because we have neither the specialists nor the equipment on the Coast to provide such things as, for example, complex spinal surgery.

What is working well on the Coast?

The West Coast leads New Zealand in the provision of telemedicine which has been deployed in eight towns from Karamea to Haast. Coupled with medical centres staffed by rural nurse specialists, patient waiting and travel times have reduced. The same technology is also allowing specialists to 'see' and recommend treatment for patients who would otherwise have had to travel to Greymouth or Christchurch.

Our paediatric service is second-to-none in the country for its use of this technology. Through initiatives such as telemedicine, and enabling primary health services to handle a wider range of cases, we can sustain a variety of health services on the West Coast and ensure that those who do need more specialised care, on the Coast or elsewhere, have access to it within reasonable waiting periods.

If you have any questions about any aspect of health services on the West Coast, please send them to communityrelations@westcoastdhb.health.nz

*Source: Ministry of Health elective discharge figures

Let's talk about it!

It's a topic that some people may not want to talk about, but the good news is that sexually transmitted infections are steadily dropping on the Coast.

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection and using condoms is the best way to prevent infection, not to mention pregnancy.

"Currently we have the lowest rates per 100,000 population in the country," health promoter Sarah Harvey says.

Using condoms correctly is important. Condoms most often fail because they aren't being used properly. Lubricant has an important part to play as it keeps the condom stronger for longer, helping to prevent breakage.

Health promoters are distributing condom packs at various locations on the West Coast with quirky covers attractive to young people. More than two thirds of distributors have received positive feedback. Each pack contains two condoms, one sachet of lubricant, local service information and a sexual health leaflet.

"We want these condoms to be freely available to everyone in our community who needs them. It's important they are in places that are easy for people, particularly young people, to be able to get to them without having to ask or feel embarrassed about it," Sarah says in a letter to pack distributors.

"Research shows that if young people know that condoms are available for free but they still have to ask, that's a barrier for them," the letter says.

One of the most successful distribution sites is a café where the condom packs sit in a basket on the table with cutlery and sauces so it is easy for people to pick one up as they pass by.

Sarah says respect is important in all relationships, sexual or otherwise.



Left: Example of a 'quirky' condom pack

"In sexual relationships, it is even more important as you may be putting your own health, and your partner's health, at risk. Wearing a condom shows you care – about yourself and your partner. Be assertive about your health and make sure you are safe, then you can relax and enjoy being together."

"Sometimes the difficult part is having the conversation in the first place, particularly

with a new partner. If you are unable to talk about whether you are going to use a condom, then maybe you need to think about whether you are actually ready to have sex with this person. Sex should be fun, and feel good for both of you, at the time and afterwards. The stress of thinking afterwards 'what if I'm pregnant?' or 'what if I've caught something?' can ruin all the good memories of the night before," she says.

Be prepared. Carry condoms with you, and use them! Carrying condoms doesn't mean you're promiscuous, it means you are keeping yourself safe. Think of it as a sexual seatbelt – keeping you safe in case something happens.





Community Mental Health nurse Mike Dyne

Helping patients get home after a stay in hospital

After a stay in hospital, people sometimes have no understanding of the fact they have to make their own way home, especially if they have been taken to hospital in an ambulance. They might think the ambulance will do the return trip.

In principle, the New Zealand health system neither arranges, nor pays for, the return of patients to their home once they are discharged from hospitals. This responsibility and cost is that of the individual patient and their families.

In practice, hospitals and clinical staff make every effort they can to assist.

Our staff help patients by putting them in contact with social workers who can work with them to contact family, friends or community volunteers to arrange their return home. This is especially valuable for patients who are incapacitated or unable to communicate directly with support people.

If a patient has been referred to another hospital by a specialist, they may be eligible for National Travel Assistance (NTA). NTA is not means tested and eligibility criteria can be found on the Ministry of Health website <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/hospitals-and-specialistcare/national-travel-assistance-scheme>.

NTA is not necessarily designed to provide full reimbursement of travel or accommodation costs.

Eligible patients must register for NTA, make their own travel arrangements and lodge a claim for retrospective financial assistance.

Connected communities make a difference to young people

There is a public tendency to assume that, when it comes to health care, big is better and that the city systems can deliver a better and more successful service than those in the rural regions.

But, like all popularly held beliefs, the reality is often very different. There can be no better example of this than the success of the West Coast District Health Board's work with young people living with mental illness in the Greymouth region.

The Grey Base Hospital-based Community Mental Health Service is boasting an admirable record for helping re-integrate young people back into the community after discharge from a mental health facility and, probably just as important as adhering to any medications they might be on, helping them get into study or jobs.

One of the faces of this service is Community Mental Health nurse Mike Dyne, by his own admission 'no spring chicken', who says his role is often like that of a grandfather.

Mike works right across the mental health spectrum but he is particularly proud of the work the team does with a group of young people aged in the 18 years to mid-20s bracket.

"Most of these young people have come into the community after a period of residential care. It's our job

to be the interface between them, the community, the available support services and other resources so that they can recover and live healthy, active, contributing and fulfilled lives."

Mike says some of these young people have had very traumatic experiences but many are showing remarkable resilience and success on their road to recovery.

"I put this down to the community they live in as much as anything," The result is we've become good at getting these folk into jobs or meaningful study that will improve their prospects for employment in the future. It's such a great boost to them."

Being on the Coast does not mean isolation from the latest thinking and treatments.

"We make a concerted effort to keep up to date. One of the things I really like is the improved way of measuring the impact of our work. There's a robust scoring process to measure wellbeing that's been around a while but is much improved. I really appreciate how that can be a true measure for us and our clients."



Coasters going green for the good of their health

Is exercise something you loathe? If you're experiencing a weighty struggle with a chronic lack of exercise, a Green Prescription might be something you could discuss with your GP or practise nurse.

Green Prescriptions are an exercise-based referral programme with the aim of motivating inactive people to become independently active. GPs, practice nurses and other health professionals refer patients who meet the criteria (over 18, in a stable medical condition for low to moderate intensity physical activity, and less than 2.5 hours' physical activity per week) to a Green Prescription coordinator.

The Green Prescription programme is delivered in Greymouth and Buller by West Coast Primary Health and the West Coast District Health Board. Compared with national figures, the Coast is doing very well.

Once a referral is made, the participant is contacted within 7-10 days and a face-to-face meeting arranged. During the meeting there is a discussion about lifestyle, current medical conditions, personal goals and an examination of what has prevented exercise in the past. This is designed to increase the sense of 'ownership' the participant

has in making themselves better through exercise.

A physical activity plan is created which is generally for 3-4 months. Participants do a gym circuit programme and are encouraged to use the activity providers in the community. Individualised home programmes are made available for clients who cannot attend the gym.

There are also eight-week 'Active You' programmes, where the person attends various different community-based activities such as Tai Chi, the Aquatic Centre, or local gym facilities. Walking groups can also be part of the programme such as that run by the Cardiac Club.



How a green prescription helped Brian Kelly

Brian Kelly is not afraid of hard work; he's 71 and still holds down a job.

But things were getting a bit difficult for him about a year ago. He had Type 2 diabetes, needed to lose a bit of weight, and was struggling with his mobility thanks largely to a 'dicky hip'.



Brian Kelly

Today his diabetes is under control, he's lost a little weight, he's got his mobility back, and he's still at work!

"My GP thought a Green Prescription programme would give me some mobility, which it has, and I must admit I really enjoy the sociability of it as well. I go to the gym once a week and, as often as I can, I go to the pool as well, I'm really pleased. Just last week I had a new test and my diabetes is under control, a really good test result!"

Stroke victim recovers

Stroke victim Gwen Murphy has her life back after receiving new clot-busting treatment that, until recently, was only given to heart attack patients.

Mrs Murphy came to the West Coast hospital emergency department unable to talk or move the left side of her face, her left arm, or left leg. A stroke was diagnosed and, after she had a CT scan, doctors decided a clot-busting drug, part of a process also used to treat acute heart attacks, could help.

Now Mrs Murphy is nearly back to normal. She can talk and move her left leg and arm as if she had never had a stroke.

The treatment process is called thrombolysis. It is not successful for all stroke patients and has some risks but if the patient qualifies, their chances for recovery are significant.

Gwen Murphy can enjoy time with her grandchildren thanks to a clot-busting treatment used to treat her stroke.



Thrombolysis treatment for stroke patients must begin within 4.5 hours of onset so if you recognise symptoms, get the person to hospital quickly.

A clot that blocks blood flow in the brain or heart is a common cause of stroke or heart attack. The sooner a stroke-causing clot can be dissolved, the higher the chance of a good outcome for the patient.

Mrs Murphy was fortunate her thrombolysis treatment made a significant improvement in her wellbeing and she was not left with the serious disability the stroke initially caused.

Providing this new service for West Coasters is part of our involvement in a South Island-wide initiative to improve services for people that have had a stroke.

People wanting to learn more about helping people having a medical emergency should look at completing a first aid course. You never know when the skills you learn may be applied to help family, friends or someone in the community.

First aid courses are provided on the Coast by: Tai Poutini Polytechnic, St John and Red Cross.

Be flu strong this winter, get immunised now

Each year, the West Coast Health System aims to reduce the impact of influenza on the community and on our over-stretched health system. Last year, preventable influenza infections consumed hospital resources and, as ever, we are keen to shift the focus away from people ending up in hospital to keeping people safely supported to stay well at home.

It is important that everyone gets vaccinated against influenza, even young, fit and healthy people because each person who has the flu vaccine protects both themselves and everyone around them. We care about the vulnerable people in our community and so this year, our message is **“protection for others starts with you”**.

Influenza
**Don't get it.
Don't give it.**

Get immunised

Protecting yourself by getting immunised is a simple matter of calling your General Practice team. The flu vaccine is available in general practice now and until the end of July but the sooner you are vaccinated, the sooner you will be protected. Immunity typically takes a couple of weeks to develop and you want the best protection possible *before* flu starts spreading in the community.

The flu vaccine is free for people over 65, people with chronic illness such as heart disease and pregnant women.

If you don't qualify for a free vaccine, it generally costs \$20-40 dollars at your general practice and could easily be the best investment you make this year.

Is it a Stroke? Check it out the F.A.S.T way



F

Face

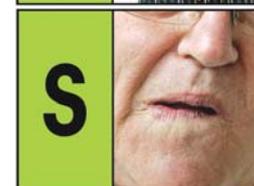
Smile - is one side drooping?



A

Arms

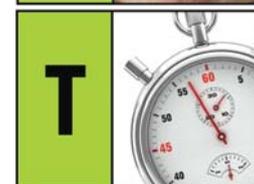
Raise both arms - is one side weak?



S

Speech

Speak - unable to? Words jumbled, slurred?



T

Time

Act fast and call 111! Time lost may mean brain lost.



Speak up, there's a way through

The West Coast DHB is supportive of the Federated Farmers "When Life's a Bitch" campaign raising awareness of mental health and encouraging farmers to get help.

A "When Life's a Bitch" wallet card lists phone numbers which can be called for support. Copies can be downloaded from the Federated Farmers website.

Federated Farmers is working alongside a number of other organisations such as the Dairy Women's Network, DairyNZ, Rural Women New Zealand, Ministry of Health, New Zealand Institute of Rural Health, AgResearch, Young Farmers, Rural Support Trusts, Vodafone, Beef and Lamb, FarmSafe and AgITO to make rural mental health and wellbeing a priority.

Symptoms of depression can include feeling persistently unhappy, anxious, stressed, frustrated, pressured, low and/or angry.

Federated Farmers national board member and health and safety spokesperson Jeanette Maxwell says depression is becoming an increasing issue for rural communities.

"The latest data released by the Ministry of Health shows there is a significantly higher rate of suicide in rural areas than in urban areas.

"The most recent suicide rate for people living in rural areas is 16 per 100,000 people compared to 11.2 for every 100,000 people living in urban areas.

"With mounting compliance costs, increasing local and central government demands, weather events, coupled with the reduced forecasted lamb and milk pay-outs, along with the normal stresses and strains of life, means people in rural communities may need extra help," Mrs Maxwell says.

West Coast DHB chief medical officer Dr Carol Atmore says the pocket card developed by Federated Farmers is a great way to have easy access to professional support when it is needed.

"People should never hesitate to get help if they are worried about what is happening for them, a friend or colleague. A GP doctor is a good place to start," Dr Atmore says



"When Life's a Bitch" wallet card can be downloaded from the Federated Farmers website.

Speak up
there's a way through

depression.org.nz
0800 111 757

Lifeline
0800 543 354

Emergency
111



Food to make you say “mmm”



Jen Brand is a New Zealand Registered Dietitian and Nutrition Health Promoter with the West Coast District Health Board.

Jen Brand says: “Good nutrition helps develop and support your best possible immune system, helping to fight infection and lowering your chances of getting sick.” Try this nutritious, comforting and affordable recipe this winter.



FRUIT CRUMBLE

You can't beat a fruit crumble, hot from the oven, as a dessert in winter! And it's great to know that it is generally a highly nutritious option for dessert. Packed full of goodness, it is high in fibre, helping to fill us up. It is the ultimate comfort food.

The only downside in some recipes is all the butter that's added to the crumble, try this recipe with no added butter, it's still delicious and you don't need to feel guilty having the leftovers for breakfast!

Any canned, stewed or bottled fruit - drained

Crumble topping

1 ½ cups rolled oats

½ cup wholemeal flour

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/3 cup brown sugar

¼ cup chopped walnuts

Up to ¼ cup trim milk (no more)



To make the crumble, combine the topping ingredients, except the milk, in a bowl. Add milk gradually and mix in until the mixture binds together when pressed, but is not sticky or wet. Place fruit in a baking dish and cover with the topping.

Bake at 180°C for about 20 minutes – topping should look brown and crisp. Serve with a dollop of custard, yoghurt or ice-cream.

Recipe from Appetite for Life – Participant Notes, developed by Community & Public Health 2009.

Healthy West Coast
Te Hauora o Tatou – The Health of Us All



West Coast District Health Board
Te Pouari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

We would like to thank Tourism West Coast for the use of some of the images in this publication.

We are committed to keeping you informed.

We also value your feedback and welcome comments to community@westcoastdhb.health.nz or to Community Relations, PO Box 387, Greymouth 7840.