



Waitemata
District Health Board
Best Care for Everyone

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Major new investment in mental health and addiction care in Waitemata

A fresh approach to improve mental health and addiction care will be launched by Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) on Monday at a [special event](#) hosted by Auckland University of Technology to mark World Mental Health Awareness Day.

The new initiative, *Our Health in Mind*, will see the DHB invest \$1.4 million per annum to help more people in Waitemata to get better sooner through earlier and improved access to local mental health and addiction support, assessment and treatment.

Our Health in Mind Project Manager, Helen Wood, says early recognition and treatment of common mental health and addiction issues can significantly reduce the negative impact on individuals, their whanau, communities, and wider society.

“Sometimes people do not seek help or leave it until they are very unwell. The reasons for this are many and varied.”

“These include not knowing where to go for help, the impact of stigma associated with seeking help, along with the availability and sometimes cost of services.

“*Our Health in Mind* aims to proactively keep people well rather than primarily treating ill health”.

“It does this by seeking to break down some of the barriers people face and by providing new ways to better support people to get comprehensive help at an earlier stage,” she says.

This year’s World Mental Health Awareness Day theme, *Dignity in Mental Health: Psychological and Mental Health First Aid for All*, resonates strongly with the five-year action plan outlined by *Our Health in Mind*.

“Just as with physical health concerns, seeking help for mental health or addiction concerns at the earliest stage is always best. It is no different.”

“Empowering individuals, families, whanau, friends, colleagues to know what help is available and what they can do for themselves or others in times of need can make a significant difference.”

Providing general practitioners (GPs) and practice nurses with better support and more resources to help them help their patients is a key priority for the *Our Health in Mind* Programme.

Planned initiatives include:

- Increased specialist mental health and addiction support for GPs including phone advice and in-reach services, to ensure best patient care.

- Better access to talking therapies and self-management programmes for more people.
- Additional support to allow GPs and practice nurses to offer extended consultations to patients.
- Improved listing of community resources for easy direction to the most appropriate service.
- Enhanced support to encourage earlier presentation of and help for serious and common mental health and addiction disorders, especially among Māori and Pacific communities.

The Programme also seeks to strengthen relationships and connections between primary care, non-Government organisations, specialist DHB services and community groups working in the sector.

“This will aid GPs and practice nurses in knowing what help is available for people and how to access it, making it easier for patients to transition smoothly between different services”.

“Having the ability to respond earlier to peoples’ health needs leads to better outcomes for them. But it also benefits their whanau, community and the wider health sector”.

In addition to *Our Health in Mind*, Waitemata DHB is investing in the following services to enhance the delivery of mental health care in our district:

- Additional support for inpatient facilities of \$500,000 over current budgets per annum
- Recent investment in community beds for high and complex needs of \$2.2 million in 2015/2016 year
- Continuing investment in Emergency Department mental health support services at Waitakere Hospital of around \$360,000 per annum

ENDS

To read the full *Our Health in Mind Action Plan* go to:

<http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/assets/Documents/action-plans/OurHealthInMind.pdf>

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