



15 August 2019

Asian Health Week and a special birthday at Waitematā DHB

An extra-special invitation is being issued as Waitematā DHB's Asian Health Services (AHS) prepares to mark its 20th anniversary with traditional tea-sharing ceremonies at both of the DHB's general hospitals.

All patients and visitors are welcome to join in the ceremonies at noon in the main entrance foyers of North Shore Hospital on Monday, 9 September and Waitakere Hospital on Tuesday, 10 September.

Participants will be served cups of tea by traditionally-clothed members of the Yemyung-Won community group who are hosting the events to thank Waitematā DHB for its contribution to the ethnic community.

The public events are being held as part of Asian Health Week - celebrated by the DHB to raise awareness of Asian and ethnic health care in the Waitematā catchment.

AHS Operations Manager Grace Ryu says the ceremonies coincide with AHS' 20th birthday and encourages any volunteers who worked with the organisation during its first decade to attend.

"We were the only Asian-specific service in the government sector in 1999 and many new migrants joined our hospital volunteer programme to help ethnic people and to get the work experience that would help them find jobs in New Zealand," she says. "We closed the volunteer system when we restructured in 2009 and today have 22 full-time employees, 30 bureau workers and over 200 interpreters – making us the biggest service of our kind in the DHB sector. In Asian culture, we provide good tea when we have special guests and visitors - or when we want to thank someone. So I hope the wonderful volunteers who contributed in past years can join our celebrations and regard them as a homecoming of sorts."

Waitematā DHB serves a fast-growing population of over 630,000 people and 23% of them are of Asian ethnicity. Around 30% of the DHB's total workforce is also of Asian descent.

"AHS started as a pilot project in 1999 and has proved its worth time and time again by delivering accessible, responsive and effective services to our growing Asian migrant and former-refugee communities," Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says. "We have an organisational promise to deliver best care to everyone and AHS helps us achieve that in a culturally appropriate way – enhancing patient experience and contributing to better health outcomes."

- Original AHS volunteers are also invited to a special Asian Health Week opening service at North Shore Hospital on Monday, 9 September at 2pm. The event will include traditional song and dance. Please RSVP to grace.ryu@waitematadhb.govt.nz by Monday, 2 September.

Ends.

For further information, contact:

Waitematā DHB Media Line, ph. 4871276

About Waitematā DHB

Waitematā DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 staff spread across more than 80 sites, including North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital. We are also the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry and child disability services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.