



Waitematā
District Health Board

Best Care for Everyone

5 August, 2019

Future of feet in good hands thanks to new podiatry partnership

In an effort to reduce the devastating foot-related complications from diabetes, Waitematā DHB and AUT have teamed-up to provide trainee podiatrists with hands-on experience in early diagnosis and prevention.

Diabetes affects 6% of the population and is the leading cause of lower limb amputation due to complications from nerve and blood vessel damage, according to the Ministry of Health.

Preventative treatment by podiatrists can significantly reduce the likelihood of serious complications and it is a key area of focus for Waitematā DHB's High-Risk Foot Clinic, which is currently treating more than 500 patients in North and West Auckland.

To help undergraduate students gain skills and experience in caring for people with high-risk feet, Waitematā DHB's Diabetes Podiatry Service and AUT's Department of Podiatry have launched a combined clinic within AUT Integrated Health (AIH) on Akoranga Drive – a five-minute car trip from North Shore Hospital.

AIH is a state-of-the-art interprofessional learning environment for Bachelor of Health students, which gives patients access to a wide range of related services, including occupational therapy, oral health, physiotherapy, counselling-psychology, psychotherapy and nursing.

"Our podiatrists aggressively treat active foot wounds or infections and work closely with patients and whānau to educate them about early warning signs and how to protect their feet from deterioration. It is important for patients to identify nerve damage and structural changes to their feet that would result in a loss of sensation and put them at risk of further damage or wounds," says Director of Allied Health, Scientific and Technical Professions Tamzin Brott.

"The more proactive we are in this area, the better the outcomes are for our patients, which is why we see huge potential in developing a future workforce in this specialist area," says Ms Brott.

"We are very much looking forward to working with Waitematā DHB in the provision of high-quality healthcare. This collaboration opens up opportunities for clients to receive wraparound, interprofessional care from a range of health students here at AIH," says AIH Clinical Manager Dr Brenda Flood.

Waitematā DHB podiatry staff will attend the weekly clinics and oversee the clinical management of patients.

ENDS

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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.