



29 November 2019

Waitematā DHB nurses to help fight Samoan measles epidemic

Waitematā DHB has answered a call to support a vaccination mission to Samoa.

Samoa is currently under a 'state of emergency' due to the country's measles epidemic and the Samoan government has launched a compulsory mass vaccination programme in response.

With up to 70% of the entire Samoan population needing to be immunised, help is needed to administer the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Two teams of Waitematā DHB nurses are being sent to Apia, Samoa to assist. The first team left on Wednesday (27 November) and the next team will leave next week. A third team is on standby to leave mid-December if needed.

Each team will stay a week - administering the MMR vaccine to those who need it and supporting the Counties Manakau DHB Pacific Health Team Leaders (who are coordinating the mission).

As of Wednesday, 27 November there have been 33 deaths from Measles – the majority of which have been children. Hundreds of new cases are being reported every day.

Waitematā DHB Director of Nursing Jocelyn Peach says the nurses' response to the measles outbreak in Auckland and in Samoa has played a huge part in combating the disease.

"The Community Public Health Nurses have been very proactive in trying to offer vaccinations where they are most needed," says Jocelyn. "The nurses who are heading over to Samoa won't have an easy time but they are willing to work outside of their comfort zones, often in difficult circumstances, to help the people of Samoa. I'm extremely proud of them."



Caption: Waitematā DHB nurses headed to Samoa include Back (left to right) Joseph Auimatagi, Richelle Webster-Styles, Sue Wilson, Janet Hanson and Alex Long. Front (left to right) Rose Cairns-Morrison, Annette Tempest, Tracey Brooksbank.

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.