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Generous support enables new Spiritual Centre to open for patients and whanau

A new multi-faith Spiritual Centre, 'Ahurewa', was officially opened by Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) at North Shore Hospital today.

The facility has been designed to cater for people of all faiths and includes two seminar rooms, a chapel, a prayer room and a quiet room for families who may be absorbing difficult news.

The project was made possible by more than \$575,000 in generous donations to the Well Foundation, the DHB's official fundraising body, and to the DHB directly. In addition, local community groups have kindly donated significant sacred items and furnishings of significance to their faith and cultures. A significant Maori sculpture was given by Ngati Whatua as well as two antique tukutuku panels.

The official opening signals the start of a week of celebrations involving members of the Maori, Jewish, Christian, Pasifika, Muslim and Asian communities coming together to hold events within the new facility.

The Spiritual Centre replaces the previous North Shore Hospital chapel, which made way for the development of new clinical facilities two years ago. Chief Executive Dr Dale Bramley said the new space allowed the DHB to cater for the spiritual needs of patients, their families and whanau as well as their physical healthcare needs.

"We provide 275,000 bed days' worth of care each year within our facilities but, up until now, there has not been a space dedicated to the spiritual needs of those we care for," Dr Bramley said.

"Given that our DHB's primary purpose is the relief of suffering and the promotion of health, it is important that we cater for more than just the physical needs of our patients.

"For people who may be going through a difficult time personally or in relation to a loved one, it is important that we offer a space for reflection, contemplation and, for those who are so inclined, prayer.

"This is a facility that all people are welcome to make use of, either by attending services or visiting for some quiet time alone. We are incredibly grateful to all those who have supported this project, which the DHB could otherwise not have completed."

One of the key features of the centre is its large stained-glass windows, originally from a church in Pennsylvania in the early 1900s. Funds were raised by local supporters to bring the window to Auckland after the church's closure.

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