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**3 September 2018**

**North Shore Hospital marks a year of Herceptin treatment**

It's been a year since Michelle Jackson received her first Herceptin treatment - the first patient to ever receive the drug at Waitematā DHB.

The DHB introduced Herceptin treatment at North Shore Hospital to help ease the pressure of travel and parking for people who previously had to travel to Auckland City Hospital.

Michelle, of Snell's Beach, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016. Radiotherapy and chemotherapy helped her beat the cancer but Herceptin treatment, administered intravenously, was required once every three weeks for 75 minutes per session over the course of a year to stop it returning.

The drug has shown to be effective in treating people with HER2-positive breast cancer acting as a preventer. Herceptin works on the surface of a cancer cell by blocking the chemical signals that can stimulate growth.

"I started my course of Herceptin treatment at Auckland City Hospital but coming to North Shore Hospital meant I was able to enjoy a nice, new facility closer to home during a tough time in my life," she says.

Michelle remains cancer-free and will undergo annual mammograms. Breast screening for women aged between 45 and 60 is recommended every two years.

About 350 people from Waitematā are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. Twenty-nine women have benefited from the local Herceptin service in its first 12 months.

Due to the success of Herceptin delivery so far, plans have been made to further expand treatment being offered locally in the coming year including increasing the number of days available for treatment from one day to two.

Short Stay ward charge nurse manager Liz Pitney says her team is pleased to be able to make life a little easier for Herceptin patients.

"This is a direct way to help people in our local community with this diagnosis. We have learned over the past year that the women undergoing treatment here are amazing and it has been an honour to work with them," she says.

Waitemata DHB Chief Executive Dr Dale Bramley says delivering Herceptin treatment is part of the DHB's ongoing commitment to improving patient experience and health outcomes.

"Enabling people access to the care they need closer to home is a priority for our DHB and we are pleased this has made a real difference for them," he says.

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**For further information contact**

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