



Waitematā

District Health Board

Best Care for Everyone

25 June, 2019

Waitematā DHB arming younger generations with life-saving information

Waitematā DHB, which cares for the largest district population in the country, is taking a fresh approach to health promotion in an effort to boost awareness of bowel health.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world, with around 100 people dying every month. However, if caught in the early stages most bowel cancer can be successfully treated.

To assist with drawing attention to this important issue, the DHB's Health Promotion Team will – for the first time - work directly with a group of Year 12 students at Massey High School in West Auckland to teach them about bowel cancer and the importance of early detection through regular bowel screening.

The students will pass this knowledge on to the Year 9 and 10 students at a health expo - alongside the giant inflatable bowel - on 28 June as part of an NCEA internal assessment for Level 2 Health.

Waitematā DHB purchased the inflatable bowel in January this year and it has proven to be a surprise hit with teenagers.

Sandra Skipwith, who leads Waitematā DHB's Health Promotion Team for the Bowel Screening Programme, has been delighted by the response from young people who have been asking "very pertinent questions" at events such as Polyfest in March.

"Although the eligible age range for the Government's free Bowel Screening Programme is 60-74 years, young people we have spoken to recognise they could play an important role in sharing information and supporting their whānau to make good decisions around bowel screening," says Mrs Skipwith. "We are now extending the whānau ora approach - where wellbeing is a family concern rather than an individual matter - into secondary schools."

Massey High School health teacher Mikayla Loader, who is overseeing the expo, says the students are highly-motivated by the opportunity to get directly involved in health promotion.

"Learning becomes that much more meaningful when the students themselves are organising and facilitating their stalls to raise awareness amongst their peers and whānau," says Ms Loader.

Ms Loader says the expo will also provide the students with coping strategies to support them when faced with everyday health issues such as cancer, smoking, body image, nutrition stress and relationships.

For more information on the National Bowel Screening Programme visit:

www.bowelscreening.health.govt.nz.

ENDS

Waitemata DHB media team 09 487 1276

PICTURE PROVIDED FOR PUBLICATION



Pictured in front of Waitematā DHB's inflatable bowel are (from left to right): Waitematā DHB Health Promotions Manager Sandra Skipwith with Massey High School students Emnita Sogivali, Rejeli Niurou, Poi Afeveti, Mele Alefaio and Waitematā DHB Health Promoter Wiki Shepherd-Sinclair.