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For immediate release

Record number of Māori doctors in Waitematā DHB Specialist Mental Health and Addictions Services

The number of senior Māori doctors in Waitematā DHB's specialist mental health and addictions service is set to reach seven – the highest number ever for the organisation.

Three of the five doctors currently work in Whītiki Maurea addictions team, the DHB's Māori Mental Health and Addictions clinical service. Another doctor is based within the Community Alcohol and Drug Services (CADS) and one works in the Child Youth and Family Early Psychosis Intervention team. Two new Māori psychiatry registrars are joining Waitematā DHB's specialist mental health and addictions service in the coming weeks.

The appointments represent Waitematā DHB's on-going commitment to improve Māori health outcomes and to ensure its staff-mix better represents the community that it serves.

Waitematā DHB has seen the number of reported Māori in the workforce increase by 80 percent between June 2015 and May 2020.

Whītiki Maurea psychiatrist, Dr Kiri Prentice, who is affiliated with Ngāi Tuhoi and Ngāti Awa, says encouraging more Māori into mental health leadership roles is vital.

“Māori have a higher disease burden and are disproportionately worse in social and health statistics,” she says. “In order to address these issues, Māori need to be in positions of leadership and decision-making to support the expansion of, and access to, Māori kaupapa services which contribute to improved outcomes.”

Māori kaupapa services across Whītiki Maurea provide a nurturing environment for the next wave of Māori leaders. “These services provide a unique Māori experience that enhances the cultural competence of non-Māori staff and students who work in them,” says Dr Prentice.

Increased numbers of Māori doctors will help address inequities and barriers for Māori in the health system and encourage more Māori to consider a career in mental health, she says.

Whītiki Maurea consists of three services which work together to support tangata whai i te ora (service users of Māori descent) and whānau to achieve the best possible health outcomes.

These services are Te Ātea Marino, a Māori kaupapa-based addiction service operating across metro Auckland, MOKO Service which is a Māori kaupapa-based specialist mental health service for adults in the Waitematā DHB district and Te Pae Ahurea, providing specialist Māori cultural elements that stem from a Māori worldview.

Māori doctors currently working at Waitematā DHB Specialist Mental Health and Addiction Services:

- Dr Claire Paterson: psychiatrist; Early Psychosis Intervention (Ngāi Tahu)
- Dr Vicki Macfarlane: Medical Officer and addiction specialist at CADS (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Pūkiao and Ngāti Rangiwewehi)
- Dr Mike Ngawati: psychiatrist at Whītiki Maurea and CADS (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine)
- Dr Kiri Prentice: psychiatrist at Whītiki Maurea (Ngāi Tuhoi, Ngāti Awa)
- Dr John Stoyanof: Medical Officer at Whītiki Maurea (Te Rarawa , Ngāpuhi, Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Awa and Te Arawa).

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