



Stacey Ellis and her family

Are you up to date with your immunisations?

Following on from New Zealand Immunisation Week (April 29 to May 5), Southern DHB has been encouraging everyone to ensure their whole family is up to date with immunisation.

High immunisation coverage protects those who are too young or sick to be immunised – an experience Southern DHB Public Health Nurse and mum of four Stacey Ellis knows all too well.

Stacey's son had viral meningitis when he was four weeks old which left him with a low immune system in his first year. "It was really important the whole family was immunised to protect him as he was so vulnerable and too young and too sick to be immunised."

"Because he was so susceptible to becoming unwell in his first year of life,

being up to date with all of our children's immunisations was very important to make sure they didn't get sick and pass it on to him," says Stacey.

Many people will have their immunisations recorded in their Well Child Book, or check with your family doctor next time you visit to ensure you are up to date.

For more information on immunisation go to:

www.immune.org.nz, www.health.govt.nz/immunisation

or phone:
0800 IMMUNE (466 863)



Megan Sinclair

Celebrating 30 years of service

When Megan Sinclair applied for a role as a Vision and Hearing Technician (VHT) 30 years ago, she admits she had no idea what it was but thought "why not?"

She had only planned to stay for one year, but fell in love working with children. "There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child achieve something they didn't think they could do."

Three decades later Megan still has an unwavering passion for her role. "I feel what we do is very important and my love for the screening programme has never altered over the years. There is a lot more involved than most people probably realise."

VHTs provide a national screening programme for vision and hearing in early childhood centres and schools throughout

the region. Finding a hearing or vision problem as early as possible usually means a positive outcome for a child's learning and development.

Working with thousands of children means Megan has become a recognisable figure in Dunedin.

"I was recently approached by a man and his children. I remembered I had referred him for hearing at age five and he ended up getting hearing aids. He thanked me and introduced me to his family."



Southern DHB Kaumatua, Matapura Ellison

First anniversary for bowel screening

The Southern DHB's National Bowel Screening Programme recently marked its first anniversary, and figures show it is having a significant impact on the lives of local residents.

According to provisional Ministry of Health figures to the end of March, 62 people have been diagnosed with bowel cancer as a result of the Southern programme. In addition, 552 people with non-cancerous polyps – which can become cancerous over time – have been identified and treated.

The National Bowel Screening Programme is a free programme offered to men and women aged 60 to 74 years who are eligible for publicly-funded health care.

Southern DHB Kaumatua, Matapura Ellison, is a champion of the programme.

His father was diagnosed with bowel cancer at age 82.

"They caught it through a random health check," says Mr Ellison. "They operated on him and removed the cancer, and he went on to live till he was 100. We are so relieved we had our father for all that time."

Mr Ellison is pleased bowel screening is available here in the South.

"The programme is really important to me and my whānau. I want to be here to enjoy my mokopuna yet to be born – and hopefully to live as long as my father!"





Celebrating our amazing award-winning nurses: Front row left to right: James Mather, Justine Dahlenburg, Julie Coverson, Joanne Robertson-Smith, Georgia-Rae Flack. Back row left to right: Linda Grady, Trudy Galer, Jen Gow, Jodie Healey, Madeleine Esdaile. Absent: Maria Baby.

Nurses honoured at Excellence Awards

International Nurses Day (May 12) was celebrated with an awards evening this week, to formally recognise and celebrate innovation and outstanding practice in the nursing profession across Otago.

This year, recipients were acknowledged and honoured at the Otago Nursing Excellence Awards, held at the Otago Polytechnic Hub in Dunedin on Monday 13 May.

“We are thrilled to recognise the significant contribution our nurses make to improve the health and well-being of our community,” says Southern DHB Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Jane Wilson. “We know there’s incredible commitment to improve and advance nursing practice, and this celebration provided an opportunity for nurses’

contributions to be properly recognised.”

The Awards are held bi-annually in Otago alternating with Southland, and provide a unique opportunity for nurses to come together and celebrate innovation, clinical excellence, leadership, and research.

“We were delighted to have received nominations for nurses working across a wide range of practice environments,” says Mrs Wilson.

Award categories included Innovative Practice, the Rising Star Award, Education, Clinical Excellence, Leadership, along with a surprise Award introduced this year - the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Award for outstanding contribution at an organisational level. This award went to

Southern DHB Charge Nurse Manager Jen Gow for her work in leading the ‘Releasing Time to Care’ programme, designed to streamline basic processes and increase the amount of time for nurses to tend to patients.

Scholarships were funded by Southern DHB, Enliven Presbyterian Support Otago, HealthCare Otago Charitable Trust, Otago Polytechnic, Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust, the Donald Malcolm Research and Education Fund, and the Neonatal Trust.

Southern DHB would like to say a big ‘thank you’ for the huge contribution nurses make every day to health outcomes and communities. As part of International Nurses Day celebrations, staff were treated to cake sponsored by Southern DHB and the New Zealand Nursing Organisation.

Thank you to our amazing midwives!



Midwives in arms (from left): Stefanie Kalmakoff, Sue Nash and Penny Coggan

Each year more than 3500 babies are born across the district and every single birth has a midwife involved in caring for the mother and her baby.

“We are incredibly proud of our midwives, their achievements and dedication providing high quality care for women, babies and their families,” Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Jane Wilson. “It’s a role that requires dedication, patience,

emotional and mental strength as they support women right throughout their pregnancy and beyond.”

Staff were treated to cake to say thank you for their hard work and important contribution to the health and well-being of mothers and babies at every point of maternity care.

Thank you to our dedicated midwives!

One-on-one pregnancy and parenting education sessions

Starting a family is an exciting time, but there are lots of questions too! Plunket’s pregnancy and parenting education (PPE) courses, supported by Southern DHB, are a helpful place to start.

PPE – or antenatal or childbirth classes – provide first-time parents and their support people with valuable information and support at an important time.

For those who cannot attend the regular PPE session, one-on-one classes may be available. These sessions can be requested in cases where language, mental or physical health or location make attending group classes challenging.

Every course is facilitated by a qualified facilitator, and each facilitator follows the Ministry of Health recommended service specifications for Pregnancy and Parenting Education.

Topics covered include maternity services in New Zealand, healthy pregnancy, pregnancy care, labour and birth, postnatal care, breastfeeding, safe sleep and early stages of parenting.

<https://www.plunketppe.org.nz/>

Commissioner Update

Kathy Grant



I am delighted to announce that Dunedin oncologist Dr David Perez and former Canterbury DHB CEO Jean O’Callaghan will be joining me and Richard Thomson as deputy commissioners, following the loss of deputy commissioner Graham Crombie who passed away unexpectedly three months ago.

We are now entering the final phase of our term as a commissioner team, and our key focus is making sure the strategic developments and improvements that have been made are secure and able to be handed over successfully to the incoming board.

These include the system-wide transformation encompassed in the DHB and WellSouth’s Primary and Community Care Strategy and Action Plan; the gains made in the ‘Valuing Patients’ Time’ programme to improve patients’ journey through the hospital system; the Southern Future work to help build a stronger organisational culture; and the progress in envisaging future ways of providing health care as we design the new Dunedin hospital.

All these efforts and more have been aimed at reorienting and strengthening the health system in the Southern district, and our priority over the coming months is to cement these changes to give the new board the best possible chance of success.

We had already identified that a deputy commissioner with a clinical focus would be a valuable addition to the team at this time. However, Graham’s passing sadly interrupted this planning, and forced us to look more broadly at the skills needed across the team over this crucial period.

We continue to feel the loss of Graham, and he cannot be replaced. However, David’s greatly respected clinical voice and decades of experience at Southern, along with Jean’s wealth of international organisational and health care experience, provide us with enormously valuable expertise and I am grateful for their willingness to step into these roles.

Finally, this week brought great celebration of our largest workforce, with International Nurses’ Day and the Nursing Excellence Awards. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners, and indeed all our nurses, who do an incredible job every day. The difference you make through the care you provide when people are at their most valuable is absolutely humbling, and we sincerely thank you all!