



Deputy Chief Medical Officer Tim Mackay, Commissioner Kathy Grant, and Executive Director People Culture and Technology Mike Collins at the official opening of the Southland Study Hub.

Southland Study Hub officially opened

A new \$1.5 million study hub at Southland Hospital was officially opened last month.

The hub is a partnership between Southern DHB and the University of Otago and is on the ground floor of the recently renamed Southland Learning and Research Centre, on the hospital campus.

The hub has been developed to encourage more collaboration between the various health disciplines, and the University and DHB, in training and research.

Southern DHB Commissioner Kathy Grant says the hub is the latest step in the long-standing partnership between the university and the teaching hospitals in the district.

“This highly-valued relationship has long been at the heart of specialist care at Dunedin Hospital, and since the merging of the DHBs has extended to Southland Hospital, with many staff who share roles as clinicians and academics. It is fitting that we now have a dedicated study space to support this important work.

This development will benefit the future generation of medical professionals, and ultimately the people of the Southern district.”

Southland community groups will be encouraged to use the new centre as well, for a range of purposes that could include video links to public lectures in Dunedin, information evenings for potential Otago students and public meetings.



Uplift your mental wellbeing during Mental Health Awareness

Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) between 23 and 29 September is an opportunity to explore the experiences, actions, relationships and surroundings that uplift our mental wellbeing.

Mental health and wellbeing is something for everyone to treasure and look after. Sometimes there are things that impact our mental health and wellbeing that we can't control and this can make life difficult. Exploring the ways you can feel good is a useful tool to help you manage the ups and downs of life – at home, in the community, at work and beyond.

MHAW is underpinned by Te Whare Tapa Whā, a model designed in 1984 by leading Māori Health Advocate Sir Mason Durie.

Throughout MHAW you and your whānau, school or workplace can explore wellbeing through Te Whare Tapa Whā – a Māori model of health that helps us identify where we need extra support. It describes health as a wharenuī/meeting house with four walls. These walls represent taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing, taha hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing, taha tinana/physical wellbeing and taha whānau/family and social wellbeing. Connection with the whenua/land forms the foundation. When all four walls and the foundation are strong, we feel strong, too.

To learn more about Mental Health Awareness Week, visit: <http://www.mhaw.nz>



Starting healthy habits early

Pupils at Invercargill's New River Primary School learned about the digestive system, bowel health and the importance of healthy eating habits last month, in partnership with the Southern DHB's National Bowel Screening Programme.

The pilot programme shared the benefits of adopting healthy habits early. The Programme team guided children through classroom discussions about the body and nutrition, followed by a trip through a giant inflatable bowel where the pupils engaged with interactive panels inside.

They also learned a little about the National Bowel Screening Programme, with information tailored to suit each age level.

“The children were encouraged to share their learning with their families and loved ones,” says Emma Bell, Programme

Manager. “Each child was able to take home a postcard promoting the National Bowel Screening Programme to share with someone important to them. The postcards feature images of our bowel screening champions, who represent a range of ethnicities and backgrounds.”

New River Primary School Assistant Principal, Gina Larson-White, says the school was delighted to host the education sessions.

“We are always keen to raise awareness among our community members about health issues that may affect them and their whānau”

It's hoped this programme will be offered to other Southern schools in future.



Heather Casey and the Hon Greg Hunt MP

Director of Nursing wins top Australasian award in mental health

The expertise, dedication, professionalism and hard work of Heather Casey, Southern DHB Director of Nursing, Mental Health, Addictions and Intellectual Disability has been recognised at the 2019 Mental Health Service Awards of Australia and New Zealand programme for service to mental health.

Heather won the award in the Exceptional Contribution category given in recognition of her outstanding contribution to mental health service delivery.

The award was announced at the annual Mental Health Services Conference held in Brisbane, Queensland, and presented by The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Federal Minister for Health.

Heather, has worked for the Southern DHB for over 20 years and has played a significant leadership role in mental

health nursing incorporating clinical service input to local and national policy as well as research and teaching. She's been instrumental in developing the role of mental health nurse practitioner, mentoring and supporting nurses with leadership potential.

She has championed the need for, and piloting of a primary care nursing focused mental health and addiction credential programme. This has led to a programme that eight years on, is doubling in size year on year, and currently has nearly 300 credentialed primary care nurses engaged in mental health and addictions best practice delivery.

Heather also holds a significant number of professional roles including a member of the Health Quality and Safety Commission's National Mental Health and Addictions Quality Improvement

Programme Leadership group, supporting the programme at local, regional and national levels.

Southern DHB Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Jane Wilson says she's delighted Heather has received this well-deserved award.

“Heather is a true nursing leader and has a real passion for mental health nursing. She has worked tirelessly to grow the profession and is making a significant contribution to mental health services. Southern DHB is very fortunate to have Heather as one of our Directors of Nursing”

What do I need to know about measles?

The recent measles outbreaks across New Zealand have created lots of questions in the community and on social media.

Most Kiwis born before 1969 have already been exposed to measles as it was a common childhood illness before the measles immunisation was introduced in that year. While you might hear older people playing down the impact of measles, the 'I had measles and I am fine' sentiment is not a fair reflection of the risk that infection poses to some groups in the community.

While having both doses of MMR vaccination at 15 months and 4 years of age protects about 99% of those vaccinated from infection, there are some people who can't be vaccinated.

There are people in our community who are especially vulnerable to the effects of measles including babies and those who can't be vaccinated because of age or medical condition, or who are pregnant or immune compromised.

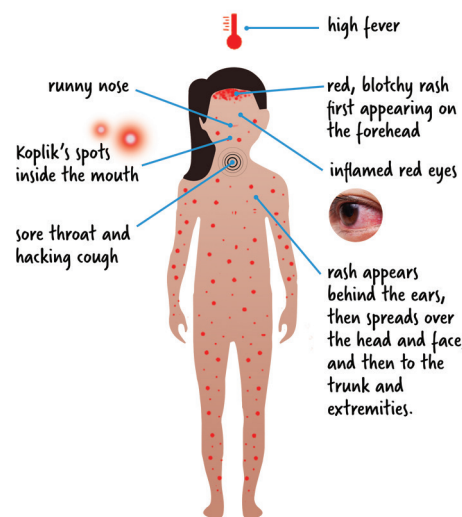
In New Zealand, more than 15 measles cases out of every 100 are hospitalised. Pneumonia accounts for nearly two thirds of measles deaths. Common complications include ear infections, diarrhoea and pneumonia. There are other rarer complications such as measles encephalitis (an inflammation of the brain) that leaves a significant proportion of those affected with permanent brain damage.

Measles during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage and premature labour.

Death occurs in approximately 1 in 1,000 reported cases of measles, overall, in developed countries.

Measles is an airborne virus which means it can be easily passed on through coughs and sneezes. Infected individuals are often contagious before they start showing symptoms, increasing the chance that they will give measles to unvaccinated people at their school or workplace.

Measles symptoms



If you or your family member suspect measles it is important that you immediately isolate yourself. Call your GP or Healthline 0800 611 116 for advice, don't attend in person.

Commissioner's Update

Kathy Grant



Spring has arrived, in all its glorious colour and wild weather.

This Spring has begun with an unwelcome visitor to our district however – measles. At the time of writing, 21 cases had been notified, centred around Queenstown. These are just a fraction of the cases across the country, with Auckland most affected by the outbreak.

This is a reminder of the importance of the steps we need to take as a community to keep ourselves and each other well. High levels of immunity across the population are essential if we are to prevent the disease reaching those who are most vulnerable – our babies who are too young to be vaccinated, those who are unable to be vaccinated for other reasons such as allergies, and people whose immunity has been compromised.

The Southern district has traditionally had relatively high rates of immunisation, and we hope this will assist us as we try to bring this disease under control.

The benefits of early interventions to improve the health of our population has also been borne out with the success of the National Bowel Screening Programme across the Southern district. We have among the highest participation rates in New Zealand, and much higher than the national average for Māori. In some ways it seems strange to celebrate reaching the milestone of discovering 100 cancers through this programme – these are never diagnoses one wishes to make. But it is some comfort to know that were it not for the programme, all of these cancers would have been discovered later, and some possibly too late. It's worth noting also that since the bowel screening programme commenced, more people have been investigated on the basis of their symptoms (as in, not through the bowel screening programme), possibly due to greater awareness of bowel health.

With next week Mental Health Awareness Week, we are reminded again that the health and wellbeing of our community is a combined effort. Thank you to everyone who has reached out to someone in need, taken steps to protect themselves and others from disease, participated in a screening programme or encouraged others to do so.

And thank you to all those whose work to keep people well, prevent conditions from developing or stopping them in their tracks is often invisible. It is greatly appreciated.