**Community Health Council**

**Highlights from meeting 1st February 2024**

**Chair Lyneta Russell**

**1. New Members**

We were thrilled to welcome Chris Middlemiss and Beryl Wilcox as two new members of the Council, both from Southland. You can find out a bit more about Chris and Bery’s [here](https://www.southernhealth.nz/about-us/consumer-engagement/community-health-council/community-health-council-members). As a number of our current Council members are coming to the end of their term and we will have to sadly farewell them we are keen to hear from other people in our communities who would be interested in becoming Council members in what is an exciting time to be involved in our southern health services. If interested, please email [chc@southerndhb.govt.nz](mailto:chc@southerndhb.govt.nz) and ask for further information.

**2**. **Chief Medical Officer- David Gow**

In the first of what is to be a regular place on the Community Health Council monthly agenda David Gow attended the meeting to talk about communication with our community and how a better balance between the good things that are happening, and the reality of some of the pressures, can be achieved. Strengthening the relationship with the ODT, looking at ways successes can be celebrated and more stories sharing the consumer voice were possible starting points.

**3. Clinical Transformation Group**

Jack Ruddenklau provided an update on progress. The CTG met on the 24th of January with the interior team for the inpatient building. A few discussion points were raised, including the front of house and radiology interiors. Marie and Jack are close to finalising selection of the Clinical Transformation User Group which at this stage is expected to only meet every two months.

4. **Key Community Health Council Member Issues**

Each meeting CHC members outline the key issues in their communities. Interpreters came up yet again- this time it was asked what training interpreters received that gave them some background to navigate medical terms. Our Te Anau member talked to a letter that was sent to the new Minister of Health re health inequities in that area and our Oamaru member drew our attention to the layout of the Oamaru Hospital ED. We also talked about the difficulty some consumers have with the different accents we have in our diverse workforce. It is OK to ask for something to be repeated, or to politely request that the message is conveyed by someone else. The lack of transitioning processes from child to adult services in some areas was also highlighted.

5.. **Update from Disability Working Group**

John Marrable updated the Council on several issues of interest to the Council. Of concern is the reduced number of sign language interpreters in Southland, and concerns within the disability community of the proposed Te Tiriti changes.

6. **Updates from Te Whatu Ora and WellSouth**

Hamish Brown and Andrew Swanson-Dodds provided updates from Te Whatu Ora and WellSouth respectively. Areas covered this month were the uncertainties created by the election, immunization challenges, where should the WellSouth office be located so that it is more accessible, the increase in acute surgery over the Christmas period, the significant reduction in the gynae waitlist in Southland, challenges in the mental health workforce shortages and positive news with the employment of 100 new graduate nurses and a number of house officers. While ED admissions are declining the peaks and troughs of high acuity patients do often overwhelm the system, and finally ending on another positive note describing the southern leadership[ team as being stable despite the significant changes happening throughout the system.

**7. Next Meeting** Will be held in Invercargill on the 7th March 2024.

6th February 2024