**Community Health Council**

**Highlights from meeting 7th March 2024**

**Chair Lyneta**

**1. Clinical Transformation Group Update**

Regular attendees at the Council meetings are Jack Ruddenklau and Marie Wales who are the community advisors on the Clinical Transformation Group of the New Hospital Build. This month they reported that the recent outpatient building codesign meeting was very positive and it was clear that the range of professionals who attended want to see change. The recent change of government and potential funding constraints is cause for concern but is outside of their scope. Jack and Marie are to be supported in their role by the newly formed Community Voice group who meet for the first time on the 21st March.

**2**. **Presentation by Craig Ashton - Southern Blood and Cancer Service**

Aware that this service had received a lot of negative media attention recently, the Council had invited Craig along to update, and to inform re some of the positive strategies underway within this service. The service has been on the receiving end of some recent negative media attention, however there is an alternative viewpoint to consider. Craig provided information on the workforce supporting this service, that the necessity to travel for services was no different to other areas in NZ, and the unfortunate media reporting of Health and Disability investigations which were often reported years after the event, and after changes had been made in response to the issue resulting in the investigation.

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

Richard French (Chief Medical Officer, Te Whatu Ora Canterbury) has been in Dunedin the day of the meeting with the focus of the meeting being what Southern could learn from Canterbury. David suggested that we need to reframe the idea that going out of town is “bad”, sometimes that is the best place for the patient to be, but we also need to ensure that in reframing patients are presented with choice.

4. **Clinical Council - Rebecca Brushwood**

Rebecca outlined some of the issues currently being considered by the Clinical Council of Te Whatu Ora Southern. It was good to hear of some of the positive work occurring in the ophthalmology department to help ensure a better service for consumers.

5.. **Council member roundtable**

Each member provided an update from their community. Good news was that a recent Māori/Pasifika health hub was looking at getting funding to reduce appointments for Māori, Pasifika and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds to just $15. Concern was expressed that the new lead for the Mental Health Directorate had moved on to another role before he had even taken up the Directorate role. It was concerning to hear that in Southland school principals were advising that the wait times for children for services such as dietitian, grommets, needs assessments are taking significant time, and that this is having a flow on effect on their education. Something we can follow up on when we meet in Southland in April.

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

Andrew Swanson-Dodds gave a very informative presentation on Southern primary health practices, providing demographic data, and outlining some of the challenges currently facing these services in our area.

**7. Next Meeting** Will be held in Invercargill on the 4th April 2024.

15th March 2024