**Community Health Council**

**Highlights of meeting 30th January 2025**

**Chair Lyneta Russell**

**1. Disability Working Group- John Marrable.**

John provided an update on the work of the group. It was great to hear that the Hidden Disability Sunflower is close to being rolled out and has been positively received. Isabelle from WellSouth attended the recently held Quarterly Forum to speak about their Disability Action Plan which is now being implemented. There was extensive community engagement in the development of this plan, so it is exciting to see it come to fruition. John reported increased collaboration at regional level, with disability groups currently in existence in Canterbury and West Coast and hoping to establish groups in South Canterbury and Nelson/Marlborough as well.   John also provided some information on the Accessible Health project underway, working on software that will ensure health information is accessible across multiple mediums in multiple accessible formats, e.g. New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read and that consumers will also be able to confirm that information held about them is correct.

**2. Member Roundtable**

Chris provided information on a project she has become involved with through Collaborative Aotearoa. This project at Gore Hospital is focused on facilitating consumers to show gratitude for their care. Overseas projects have improved staff morale.  Chris also raised a concern re patient care which will be followed up.

**Paula** raised a concern about a blind consumer who needed to complete a urine test at Awanui, but he had been sent back to his GP to complete this as the lab weren’t able to accommodate this. This will also be followed up.

**Beryl**. Noted a recent article that stated Southland has the highest rates of Caesarean sections in the country – she questioned why this is and the use of theatre resources for this. Members noted that the hospital does have a large catchment area and captures all women who are unable to have a natural birth.

**Lyneta –** provided information on the restructuring that has impacted the Consumer Engagement and Whānau Voice national and regional teams. On behalf of the Council, she wrote a letter of concern re the restructuring.

**3. 2025 Priorities**

The Council spent some time discussing their priorities for 2025 which are membership of the Community Health Council and marketing the Council. Some marketing strategies were discussed. Members noted the need to increase membership and respect diversity in doing so.

**4. Update from Health NZ -Hywel Lloyd**

Hywel has been heavily focused recently on preparing submissions about the Data and Digital Restructure Proposal which has the potential to significantly negatively impact Southern. There is also disappointment that Māori leadership has been confirmed to not be coming back to the districts. He is concerned that risk assessments have not occurred at national level.  Hywel also said that he is currently working on mutually beneficial processes with the Southland Charity Hospital. They are struggling to recruit, so they have been working collaboratively on this.

**8. Next Meeting** 6th March 2025

12th March 2025