
MEMO

To: Board Members
From: Judith Holmes, Consumer Council Chair
Date: 23 April 2019
Subject: **Consumer Council Report**

Status

This report contains:

- For decision
- Update
- Regular report
- For information

The Consumer Council met in Nelson on Monday 15 April 2019.

Recent events, such as the Christchurch mosque shootings and the Nelson and Tasman fires, have led to Council members being asked by the public about the ability of our region, and in particular the health system, to cope with major disasters. Several Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH) staff present at the meeting were able to give an overview of some of the ways that NMH prepares for, and reacts to disasters. One Consumer Council member had been heavily involved in the Civil Defence (CD) response to the Nelson Tasman fires and gave positive and informative feedback on the CD response. The Council were also pleased with the articles in the Connections staff magazine about the fires. However, it has become apparent that currently the general public have a heightened awareness of the need to educate themselves on the planned response capability of Health, Civil Defence and other community organisations when dealing with a major disaster. The Council would like to see reassuring information shared with the wider public showcasing not only NMH's good work in these past events, but also explaining how NMH prepares for disasters in conjunction with other organisations. We would like to see a multi-faceted approach to such education across all media.

The Council was moved listening to Matthew Gunter's storyⁱ, particularly poignant with Matthew's mother, Heather Gunter, present. Heather is a Consumer Representative on the Health Quality and Safety Commission (HQSC) Korero Mai programme, and with funding from the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC) she is visiting hospitals around New Zealand sharing Matthew's story. Matthew died in hospital care. The review of his death revealed several points in his care where response should have been escalated to save his life. Key messages from the documentary and presentation in general are not to normalise the abnormal, the importance of documentation, and constant need for critical thinking. The message to all patients and whanau alike is: 'Speak Up'. Heather met with us, along with the HQSC Advisor for Korero Mai, and the NMH Improvement Advisor, to discuss the patient, family and whanau escalation pathway programme, Korero Mai. The programme, which is embracing the needs of hospital inpatients, creates a pathway for patients, family and whanau to speak up when they believe that their family member is deteriorating. Family and whanau have knowledge of what is normal for their particular loved one. They have been with them over the course of their illness, (and often their lifetime) and easily notice changes in their condition. Korero Mai, a co-design programme with both consumers and staff included in the project team, aims to harness all helpful observations of whanau and patients so that treatment is optimal throughout hospital stays. The Council identified some barriers to speaking up. These include not wanting to bother busy staff, being a low user of healthcare services (so unfamiliar with processes, leading to a lack of confidence to speak up), English not being a first language, and cultural differences. The DHB has already acknowledged these problems and is implementing this programme of greater attunement to patients.

The Council is very supportive of the programme, which if consistent with projects at other DHBs, is likely to implement good communication tools and training for staff.

It was discussed that some requests coming to the Council do not have enough context around them, i.e. reason for the request, where the information sought will be used, and what will be the outcomes. The Council Facilitator has agreed to increase efforts to ensure all submissions or requests to Council contain sufficient information for the Council to be able to respond appropriately.

We are now proceeding with reference checks for three new Consumer Council members.

Judith Holmes
Consumer Council Chair

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVES THE CONSUMER COUNCIL REPORT.

ⁱ <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/partners-in-care/publications-and-resources/publication/3445/>