



Media Release
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Winners of NMDHB 2015 Health Quality & Innovation Awards Announced

A clinical initiative focused on the safe discharge of chest pain patients in the Emergency Department has won the **Excellence Award** at the **Nelson Marlborough District Health Board (NMDHB) 2015 Health Quality & Innovation Awards**, held in Nelson yesterday.

Ten finalists working in the Nelson Marlborough health sector in hospital and community-based services competed for the **Excellence Award** and the **People's Choice Award**.

Excellence Award Winner: Dr Andrew Munro

The Excellence Award winner Dr Andrew Munro, a senior medical officer and emergency specialist at Nelson Hospital's Emergency Department (ED), presented a locally developed accelerated decision pathway used for assessing risk in patients who attend the Emergency Department with chest pain.

Following national ethics approval, this observational study of 852 chest pain patients, 452 of whom consented for follow up by a structured telephone interview. The accelerated decision pathway was shown to be a rapid and safe method of determining which patients, who present to the Emergency Department with chest pain of a possible cardiac origin, were safe for discharge. Dr Munro says the results showed that more than 70 percent of chest pain patients were safely discharged from ED with no significant adverse events at 30 days. With no missed cases and unprecedented and timely discharge rates for chest pain patients, the protocol is now a clinical pathway in use at Nelson Hospital's Emergency Department.

"New Zealand's emergency departments currently see about 50,000 chest pain patients a year so it's critical to have expertise right there at the front door providing patient-centred quality care in an increasingly complex and constrained medical environment," he says.

Dr Andrew Munro has had a long relationship with Nelson Hospital first as a registered nurse more than 25 years ago, then as a junior doctor before specialising in emergency medicine as a Fellow of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. He has worked in many urban and rural EDs in Australia, England and New Zealand. A full-time Emergency Specialist in Nelson since 2009, he is a founding member of the New Zealand Emergency Medicine Network, a group of like-minded Emergency Department doctors nurses and allied health professionals motivated to produce quality research in New Zealand.

Coronary artery disease is the leading cause of avoidable deaths in New Zealand and in Nelson Marlborough for Maori and non-Maori.

People's Choice Award Winner: Kris Gagliardi

This award was based on audience voting at the finals.

Kris Gagliardi, Shift Manager for St John Ambulance won the **People's Choice Award winner** for his presentation on the single referral pathway, a joint initiative between the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board and St John. Under this new initiative, paramedics assess patients to determine they are safe to stay at home but may need further care. They can make a referral to Community Care Coordination (CCC), the single point of entry to key community health

services. The CCC then connects the patient with the right services.

Mr Kris Gagliardi says St John staff are often the eyes and the ears of the health service. “For a specified range of circumstances, this initiative enables St John to play an important role in preventative health care. Our staff are going in to people’s houses on an unplanned basis, many of the calls are to people who are vulnerable with multiple, complex social and medical conditions. With this pathway we’re now able to make referrals to multiple services for follow-up care.”

Highly Commended Award Recipients

1. *Kris Gagliardi*, St John Ambulance Tasman
2. *Maya Wernick*, Medical Student: *using plain English to explain medical condition to a patient.*
3. *Pip Herd*, Physiotherapist at Wairau Hospital: *a better way of managing osteoarthritis*

The Judging Panel

Chris Fleming, Chief Executive NMDHB; *Dr Elizabeth Wood*, GP and NMDHB Clinical Director; *Hilary Exton*, Director, Allied Health and Service Manager, Allied Health Services; and community member *Robyn Beckingsale*.

NMDHB Chief Executive Chris Fleming: “I commend the finalists for their efforts. What we’ve seen from the finalists today is great innovation and a clear demonstration that you’re all committed to the communities we are serving, you’re going beyond the call of duty, and you’re helping to improve the health system.”

“The presentations showed that people working within the health system are pushing the boundaries. It was great to see a broad spread of presentations across services. The desire to create a better service for patients, clients and service users, along with tackling issues associated with inequality, is what drives our quality improvements,” he says.

NMDHB Board Chair Jenny Black: “Thank you for taking the time to enter these awards and your dedication to finding innovative solutions to problems and issues you deal with in your daily routines. At Nelson Marlborough, we continue to punch above our weight. There will always be opportunities to improve how we operate and I look forward to seeing the applications for the next awards.”

The Health Quality & Innovation Awards is open to all health employees and health providers funded by the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board. The awards are designed to inspire innovation and showcase quality improvements, initiatives or programmes in health service and delivery. Regional presentations were held in Nelson and Wairau last month and an audience vote selected the award finalists held in Nelson on Thursday 17 September 2015.

Ends

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