



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Groups provide input for Primary and Community Health Plan

The regions health sector leaders are agreed on a collaborative approach to developing a Primary and Community Health Plan for Nelson Marlborough.

At a recent event held in Nelson, with a video conference link to Wairau, the Chief Executives of Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, Nelson Bays and Kimi Hauora Wairau Primary Health Organisations, Chris Fleming, Angela Francis and Beth Tester, all voiced their commitment to leading health sector change.

Nearly 150 people representing various areas of primary and community care - GP practice teams, pharmacies and community provider representatives such as Te Piki Oranga, St John and the Alzheimer's Society, were invited to begin developing a Primary and Community Health Plan.

NMDHB's Chris Fleming encouraged those attending to get involved, be thoughtful, and be brave about making changes to the way healthcare is provided.

"In 20 years time when you tell your children and grandchildren about this opportunity to improve healthcare and health outcomes for all in our region, will they believe you took the right actions?" he said.

With a forecast growth rate of 180 percent for the 75 plus age group in Tasman, and 130 percent in Nelson and Marlborough over the next twenty years, he stressed there is a need to change the way healthcare is provided.

"There will not be enough people of working age to provide healthcare if we continue to work the way we do now," Fleming said. "We need to plan now so we are ready to respond to the challenges we are facing, particularly the 'grey tsunami'."

Many of the presenters, including Angela Francis, Chief Executive of Nelson Bays Primary Health challenged the forum participants to look for innovative models of care to meet the emerging challenges ahead.

Guest speaker at the event was Cathy O'Malley, Deputy Director-General of the Sector Capability and Implementation Business Unit at the Ministry of Health. She shared some ideas on how to improve healthcare from New Zealand and around the world, and encouraged the group to be inventive and make better use of the resources we have now.

For instance she said although a reduction in GP numbers is forecast, the pharmacist workforce is younger and has skills and knowledge that are not currently being fully utilized.

Following on from the event, specific working groups (including consumers) will develop the initial ideas into more detailed actions. The results will be collated into a draft plan for further consultation in early 2016.

Ends

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