

MEDIA RELEASE

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Senior leaders at NMDHB to 'Take the Pledge' for White Ribbon Day

All service area leaders within the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board (NMDHB) will affirm their commitment to the 2015 White Ribbon campaign by 'Taking the Pledge'.

NMDHB acknowledges and responds to family violence as a health issue and supports White Ribbon Day to highlight that violence toward women is never acceptable.

The White Ribbon 2015 campaign is focussing on healthy, respectful relationships and the issue of consent.

One of the activities this year involves asking people to take a pledge to never 'commit, condone or remain silent about violence towards women.'

NMDHB Director Allied Health, Hilary Exton says by signing the White Ribbon pledge the organisation is reinforcing its commitment to improving health outcomes in the community.

"In Nelson and Wairau Hospitals the Violence Intervention Programme or VIP aims to reduce and prevent the health impacts of family violence and neglect," she says. "Violence isn't just physical. It's also emotional or verbal behaviour used to control someone through fear."

Two VIP coordinators are based at Nelson and Wairau Hospitals. Their role is to train DHB staff to recognise and respond to child abuse and screen for partner abuse and more recently introducing specific screening for Elder Abuse.

The DHB has had Child Protection and Partner Abuse Policies and procedures in place since 2007, which Gina Lyon, VIP coordinator says are the foundations of the Violence Intervention programme.

“Through early identification and assessment, victims of family violence are supported and referred to appropriate services or agencies,” Lyon says. “There is a lot of great work happening by midwives, social workers, nurses, medical and other staff across the organisation towards addressing this important health issue.”

The Violence Intervention Programme offers ongoing training for staff particularly across designated services such as emergency, maternity, public health, child health, sexual health, mental health, alcohol and drugs and is continuing to expand into other clinical areas both within hospital and community services. 98 percent of staff in these areas have been trained. There have been 279 identified cases of family violence since January 2015.

The VIP team also promotes networking and information sharing among domestic violence agencies, ensuring an effective multi-agency response to the matter of family violence.

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Key themes for this year's White Ribbon campaign are:

- Respectful relationships between men and women. This is the over-arching theme. Respectful relationships are based on:
 - Equality between women and men
 - The effective use of non-violent communication
 - Flexible gender behaviour for men and women
 - This includes respectful sexual relationships
- ‘Consent’ as a necessary requirement of all sexual relationships.
- Men challenging the attitudes and behaviour of other men that underpin all violence.

