

# Leave Emergency for emergencies

HEALTH Waikato physicians are asking Waikato residents to keep an eye on their health before the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

In 'silly seasons' gone by, trauma cases and those presenting from alcohol and drug-related incidents lifted the number of people presenting at Health Waikato emergency departments. However, others needed help because their GP closed down and the only place to go was an emergency department.

Waikato Hospital emergency physician Dr John Bonning said those people could avoid a long wait by planning better.

"Non-emergency presentations are not a problem for us working in emergency as we carry on seeing acutely sick and injured patients. They are however a problem for those that present with non-urgent problems, as they have to wait – sometimes many hours – before they are seen.

"If you come to ED with a non-urgent and non-emergency condition, you will still get care; you will just have to wait for that care while we deal with more urgent cases. This can take many hours that during the holidays would be better spent re-

laxing with friends and family.

"You may be given advice that your health problem is better assessed elsewhere so that you have the choice as to whether to wait or not."

Dr Bonning said it was important that people with acute medical problems did not hesitate to come to ED, but those with ongoing chronic conditions such as stable asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart failure, should do their best to manage them by having a check up at their GP and getting repeat prescriptions filled to cover that period.

In December 2007, 4442 people presented at Waikato Hospital's ED, with January 2008 figures reaching 4559 – well above the 2007/08 monthly average of 4404.

"Waikato Hospital ED is always well prepared for the holiday period, and it is all hands on deck for staff; we can't have a summer shut-down" said Dr Bonning.

"Part of this management plan is our team of clinical nurse specialists who are trained to manage low-acuity or more minor patients. If you come to ED with a minor problem, these are the



**HECTIC PACE:** Waikato Hospital emergency physician Dr John Bonning is urging Waikato residents to see their GP before primary care closes down over the Christmas/New Year period.

people who will most likely treat you."

Dr Bonning and medical officer of health Dr Felicity Dumble are Waikato District Health Board's voices of the 'Emergency for Emergencies' radio campaign asking people to keep themselves well

this summer.

"My advice is to drink sensibly, never drive under the influence of alcohol and don't get into fights. Take your medication regularly, eat healthily and stay active," said Dr Bonning.

## Local solutions for local children

Children within the Ruapehu District that end up requiring hospital treatment will now know what to expect before their visit, thanks to some proactive thinking by hospital staff.

Taumarunui Hospital registered nurse Leigh Collier, public health nurse Corynne Boyle and manager Tina Baker worked with the Waikato Primary Health Organisation (PHO) to create a book for children called 'Going to Hospital'.

"The resource is for children who may have to visit hospital and aims to help prepare them for this experience, familiarise them with procedures being carried out, and make the environment less stressful and unfamiliar to them," said Mrs Boyle.

"At the same time the book was being published, a room within the inpatient area at the hospital was decorated to produce a more child-friendly space as well."

The book, which was illustrated by local children and hospital staff, was launched on 24 November at Turaki School.

One child from each class attended the launch, along with principal Rikki Sheterline, hospital and PHO staff.

The book was sponsored by Waikato PHO and the Yelavich family of Taumarunui.



**GOING TO HOSPITAL:** Taumarunui registered nurse Leigh Collier reads 'Going to Hospital' to Turaki School students at the book's launch last week. Looking on are (back row, from left) physiotherapist Mihi Te Wano, public health nurse Corynne Boyle, and (far right) hospital manager Tina Baker.

## Fresh Future for Waikato children

HEALTH Waikato gratefully accepted a \$125,000 cheque for Waikato Hospital last month, from Progressive Enterprises as part of their 2008 Fresh Future fundraising appeal, for children's hospital services.

The hospital plans to spend the money on improvements to facilities and equipment in its paediatric areas.

Staff and customers of Foodtown, Woolworths, Countdown, SuperValue, FreshChoice and Dick Smith Electronics worldwide raised more than \$1 million after the appeal's launch in August.

Waikato Hospital is one of 10 hospitals throughout New Zealand benefiting from the 2008 appeal.

Jan Adams, Health Waikato chief operating officer, spoke at the ceremony.

"Health Waikato is the hospital and health services provider arm for Waikato District Health Board; this includes the paediatric areas and we are very grateful to receive those funds.

"This year's funds will be put to good use again to help improve the experience of the children and families who use their facilities."

Waikato DHB chief executive Craig Climo also expressed thanks to Progressive Enterprises and everyone who donated to the appeal.

"It's fantastic that we receive this money to invest into improving our children's areas.

"While they make up just 21 per cent of the New Zealand population, children are 100 per cent of our future and a very worthwhile investment," he said.

Waikato Hospital's wish list includes a \$106,000 laproscopic tower and monitor used for keyhole surgery, lazy boy chairs, couches, breast-feeding chairs and oximeters.



### Fresh faces for fresh spaces



Waikato Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is just weeks away from moving into their new building and the team is looking for some fresh faces to enjoy working in its fresh spaces.

The new NICU is shaping up to be a beautiful environment to work in, providing a lot more space and a whānau-friendly unit. Add to that a fantastic team and work flexibility, and that's the reason so many nurses travel far and wide to work at Waikato's NICU.

NICU nurses – would you like to work in a unit that offers:

- a highly supportive team environment
- considerable job satisfaction
- comprehensive orientation
- extensive learning opportunities
- flexibility with roster
- opportunities to care for sick and premature babies
- chances to work with families.

If this sounds like you, come along to our open afternoon, 12noon-2pm Thursday 18 December to get a sneak preview of Waikato Hospital's brand new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and find out why it's such a popular place to work – it could be you!