

**MINUTES OF THE WAITOMO/OTOROHANGA
COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUM MEETING HELD
THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2009, WINTEC, TE KUITI**

PRESENT:	<i>Mark Amon (Chairperson), Kim Atutahi, Merv Williamson, Shirley Willison, Wayne Jensen, Ernest Montgomery, Val Jones, Murray Loewenthal, Lynne Benefield, Marlene Matehuirua, Thia Priestly and Rachel Dekel</i>
IN ATTENDANCE:	<i>Grant O'Brien – Waikato DHB Representative Amy Thomsen – Waikato DHB Communications Consultant Jane Hudson – Waikato DHB Planning & Funding Gordon Chesterman - Waikato DHB Elected Board Member</i>

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	<i>Mark Amon - Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a special greeting to Gordon Chesterman. Waikato DHB Board Member and Chair of the Community & Public Health Advisory Committee</i>
APOLOGIES	<i>Aileen Berrigan, Kaye Nelson, Jeff Johnson, Sarah Ashby, Gale Pihama and Jim O'Hallorin</i>
MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING OF PREVIOUS MEETING	<i>Minutes of previous meeting held Thursday 27 November 2008 were tabled and taken as read. Nil matters arising</i>
ITEM 1	<p>TRANSPORT UPDATE</p> <p><i>Jane Hudson Waikato DHB attended for this item. The lack of suitable transport services for people needing to attend outpatient appointments at Waikato Hospital remains an important issue. Transport to appointments has been highlighted as a barrier by forums for some time. Waikato DHB staff have been working on identifying solutions to these problems.</i></p> <p><i>Jane presented a progress report which identified communities needing urgent support. A decision making matrix was developed from data including census population deprivation scores, availability of existing DHB funded transport services, access to Road Service Buses and distance from/to Waikato DHB hospital.</i></p> <p><i>The next step is to identify solutions for communities identified as having high transport needs. Health providers, communities and key stakeholders are to be engaged in finding local solutions.</i></p> <p><i>Gordon Chesterman told the meeting of a recent report to his committee that 25% of outpatient appointments at Waikato Hospital were not kept. People not attending their appointments or not cancelling them meant that other people were missing out. The Board needed to urgently consider texting systems or calling people the day before their</i></p>

appointments as a reminder. He acknowledged that some clinic areas were already doing this.

'Did not attends' (DNA's) are included in the scope of the transport project says Jane. Texting systems would be considered as part of the overall transport solutions to be proposed by the project group.

The next step in this project was to work with communities identified as having high transport needs. These were those that scored a 9 or 10 on the transport matrix.

Mark Amon suggested that Local Govt may be able to assist with a list of all local resources that are available to the Waitomo/Otorohanga Districts. This may help in avoiding any duplication.

The forum asked to be kept informed of progress with this project.

Transport and Accommodation Policy

Amy Thomsen attended for this item. It had become plainly clear that the current administration of this national policy wasn't working for people eligible for funds to travel to specialist appointments. Previous forums had raised the issues that the system was cumbersome, confusing, people were often given conflicting advice and there was a poor uptake across the DHB.

Amy discussed a revised brochure which sets out to improve the information for people accessing TNA assistance. (The draft brochure is attached to these minutes) As part of the review the DHB put to members that they propose to print new posters, brochures and advertise the scheme extensively across the DHB region. Gordon Chesterman labelled the system "a govt secret to stop people getting the funding' a deplorable situation he said.

Feedback on the new brochure was requested. People were asked to send any comments directly to Amy Thomsen – Media and Communications Department, Waikato Hospital or email thomsena@waikatodhb.govt.nz. Feedback is required by the end of March 2009.

ITEM 2

LOCAL ISSUES

The meeting was devoted to this discussion. Grant told members that these Forums were about ensuring that local health services met need and expectations. If they weren't then the DHB needed to know about it. Forums are a key part in this quality improvement process.

Transport & Accommodation Policy

Te Kuiti isn't eligible to for this assistance as it is just 80km's to Waikato Hospital. Several people claimed to have been told this by Waikato hospital staff, also one member told the meeting that she had had her forms returned from Dunedin as ineligible for support. The policy clearly isn't working in this area. Te Kuiti township may be 80ks from Hamilton however a number of people live outside the town and the ruling is bureaucratic nonsense. Is the system designed to meet people's needs or not?

Amy hoped that by improving the information and educating key staff in Waikato Hospital to administer the policy appropriately may overcome some of these problems.

“Many people can’t afford the costs of transport/petrol etc up front and this leads to them not attending their appointment“.

“The old system of reimbursement on the day of travel worked better”.

“could there be an emergency fund for people who can’t afford the travel costs”.

“the delay in receiving anything back from this system is disappointing”.

Gordon felt this was an issue that the new Minister might want to take up. If the system isn’t working for people and this Government wants to improve access then this barrier needs removing. The Govt can do this, DHB’s can’t, it’s a national policy, he told the meeting.

Community Gardens at Te Kuiti Hospital

*Thia Priestly told the meeting that she had secured DHB approval to use a large piece of vacant land at Te Kuiti Hospital to establish a Community garden. This Rotary led project is about engaging people in getting back to the basics of gardening. Funding will be needed to get the project started and Rotary will be looking at fund raising. Janet Hanvey HEHA Project Director is to meet and discuss support at a meeting to be held shortly. **Nicki Martin from Waikato PHO may also be interested in supporting this initiative through their blue chip ‘get cooking’ campaign.** (Murray Comments)*

“This is a great community initiative that hopefully the community will get in behind” says Thia.

North King Country Workforce Development Project

Project Manager Rachel Dekel updated the meeting with progress on this project:

- *An orientation project is nearly completed This will provide information on the area, services, rural life etc.*
- *A website is being developed. It will link to a number of other websites. Once a draft is available people will be asked for feedback.*
- *Local health career open days are to continue and will now include NGO/Community health services as well as Hospital.*
- *Strategies are being developed to invite local ex nurses to return to nursing. A joint DHB and Wintec training program is now available.*
- *Te Kuiti is to host the Rural Students Club this month. Approx 25 health students will attend a weekend of workshops and social activity designed to enhance rural practice as a career choice.*

Transport to Hospital

Getting from the town up to Te Kuiti Hospital is a problem at times for some people. The bus stops at the bus stop then there is a long and

	<p><i>steep walk up to the Hospital. What can be done about this? This is happy to be contacted if people find this a problem, “maybe a volunteer system can be developed”.</i></p> <p>After Hours Update <i>Grant told the meeting of plans to have an after hours hub for the region operating at Te Kuiti ED from 1 April. The Hub would mean that from 10pm at night people needing an after hours service would be directed to a telephone Triage Service where the level of need would be assessed. If in the opinion of the triage service a face to face consult with a medical practitioner was needed, a referral would be made to the Te Kuiti Emergency Department.</i></p> <p><i>Establishing After hours Hubs is part of the DHB’s plan to reduce the burden of after hours responsibility on rural GP’s. Similar hubs are operating at Thames, Tokoroa and Taumarunui Hospitals where results are have been welcomed by rural GP’s.</i></p> <p>Community Health Forum Chairs Forum <i>At the suggestion of CHF Chairs, there is to be a regional chairs forum held in April this year. This meeting will be a chance for discussion on the role and function of forums and how the forums can be improved for the communities they service. Chairs were asked to invite members of their group to attend the forum with them and provide names to Andrea Sutton by Friday 20 March 09. Please phone or email Andrea. 07 8343635 suttona@waikatodhb.govt.nz</i></p> <p><i>Mark thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 4.30.</i></p>
<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p>	<p>NEXT MEETING:</p> <p>Wednesday 1 July 09 2.00pm – 4.00pm Otorohanga Library OTOROHANGA</p>