

New emergency department gets plenty of attention

A new sign outside Waikato Hospital provides a sneak preview of what patients and visitors can look forward to when the new Emergency Department (ED) opens.

A full colour and detailed artist impression shows what the building will look like when complete in 2011, including the two levels above the ED.

Waikato DHB recently received funding approval for these two additional levels, known as the Acute Treatment Hub, from the Ministry of Health.

The hub will house 100 beds for General Medicine, Respiratory and the Medical Assessment and Planning Unit.

Service and Campus Redevelopment project director Ian Wolstencroft said the sign has attracted a lot of interest from passers by.

"It's a great way of showing people that there is light at the end of the tunnel and remind them that something positive will come out of all the construction and changes happening at their hospital," he said.

Mr Wolstencroft said the purpose-built building would open in two stages during 2011 and improve patients' experience when moving from ED to other areas of the hospital.

"The new ED will open in early 2011 but construction of the Acute Treatment Hub won't be completed until eight months later.



ARTIST IMPRESSION: A sign outside the ED construction site with this picture is drawing attention from passersby.

"This will not only provide greatly improved facilities for the ED but will also allow for easy transferring of very sick patients to the hospital's intensive care, high dependency and theatre suites.

"Currently, staff transfer these patients along the busy and very public red corridor," Mr Wolstencroft said.

One thing the image doesn't show you is the brand new clinical facilities and wide open spaces that will be inside the new building.

Mr Wolstencroft said that is something the public will have to wait until 2011 to see.

"I can assure you that it will be a huge improvement on the current department," he said.

Construction of the \$40 million ED and Acute Treatment Hub is part of Waikato DHB's \$300 million Service and Redevelopment project.

The project has also been responsible for the new 18-level carpark building, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and refurbishment of the hospital's

delivery suite. Next year work will start on the Waikato Clinical Centre, a new building that will link directly onto the carpark building and house day procedures including clinics, the same day admissions unit and additional theatres.

For more information about the project visit: www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/SCR.



EAR HEALTH: Seven-year-old Jake Evans gets his ears checked by Children's Ear Clinic nurse Ros Sanders.

Free mobile clinic turns stationary

You won't see the free mobile children's ear clinic doing the rounds at Hamilton schools anymore – but not because it's gone – it has just moved house.

Now operating out of newly refurbished premises at 25 Vialou St, the clinic is still open Monday to Friday but with the added benefit that its patients will always know where it is.

Better yet – it's still free.

The Ear Nurse Service carries out glue ear assessment and management, grommet checks, wax and foreign body removal, and treatment for discharging ears.

"Ear health is vital for children and adolescents. It affects their hearing, development, learning and overall physical health," said Child Vision Hearing Service coordinator Ruth Batters.

While the specialised service receives referrals from general practitioners and other providers such as Plunket, Mrs Batters says anybody who has a concern about their child's ear health can make an appointment.

"We receive referrals from all sorts of health and education pro-

viders, and are also the next stop if further checks or treatments are required after the vision hearing technicians test children for their B4 School Checks.

"But anybody can call the clinic to make an appointment of their own accord anytime.

"And that includes anyone up to the age of 18 years. Often people think we don't treat teenagers, but we do. All school age children are welcome.

"There are two ear nurses that work in the Hamilton clinic, as well as out in the surrounding communities Monday to Friday, so they are well and truly Health Waikato's experts on children's ear health."

To make an appointment with ear nurses Ros Sanders or Lynne Sinclair, phone (07) 838 3565 and visit their new clinic next to Holstein Friesian at 25 Vialou St, Hamilton.

The mobile clinic will continue to service Cambridge, Huntly, Kihikihi, Matamata, Morrinsville, Otorohanga, Paeroa, Putaruru, Raglan, Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Waihi and Whitianga.

Last chance for free influenza vaccinations

Swine flu, or Influenza A (H1N1), is not the only strain of influenza that New Zealanders need to be thinking about at this time of the year.

Seasonal influenza is also upon us and it's just as nasty.

Influenza is a viral illness that can knock out anyone, anywhere for a week or more at a time. In fact, about 300 New Zealanders are hospitalised with it every year – young and old, weak and strong.

Thankfully there are two things people can do to help prevent themselves from falling ill from the virus – immunisation and good hygiene practice.

Good hygiene means good cough and sneeze etiquette; using disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing and immediately throwing them away into a lined rubbish bin.

It also means practising good hand hygiene; thoroughly washing your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds, and then drying them for another 20 seconds.

Social distancing is also very important. This means that if you or your family are unwell that

you should not go to work yourself, and should not send your child to school or day care – or anywhere they can pass on their bugs to other people.



FELICITY DUMBLE

But there is an even better measure against influenza, and that is immunisation.

There are many groups of people who can receive the influenza vaccination for free until 30 June.

Anyone over the age of 65 is eligible for this, but there is also a whole list of other factors that make people eligible for free immunisation – just ask your

family doctor what these are to find out whether you are one.

If you do have queries or concerns about influenza immunisation and protecting yourself and your family against the virus this winter, visit: www.influenza.org.nz

And I suggest you do. Remember, you're never too fit to get hit.

• Felicity Dumble is a medical officer of health with Waikato District Health Board's Population Health Service.

Nurse-led clinic makes surgery safe and smooth

Are you booked for surgery at Waikato Hospital? An important part of the surgery process happens before you come in for your operation, when your anaesthetic questionnaire is reviewed by the team at Surgical Pre-Admission Clinic.

The clinic is the beginning of the journey for people coming to Waikato Hospital for elective (booked) surgery. It prepares a patient for safe surgery by finding out whether they are fit and well, or require further assessment at the Surgical Pre-Admission Clinic – in which case an appointment is made.

If the surgery comes under general surgery, ear/nose/throat or gynaecology specialties, the patient will be seen by one of the clinical nurse specialists who are senior nurses and experts in their fields.

"We work with doctors and anaesthetists, and can call on other hospital specialists such as physiotherapists if required," says Karin Thorburn, one of the three clinical nurse specialists working in the clinic.

"The clinic appointment can take a few hours, but it is all coordinated and in the one location at Waikato Hospital. We take the patient through



NURSE-LED: Karin Thorburn (left) talks with a patient at the Surgical Pre-Admission Clinic.

their plan of care thoroughly, so they feel involved and well informed – and we can answer any questions they have," says Karin.