

RUAPEHU COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUM MEETING HELD FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 2008

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT/APOLOGIES: Attendance register not filled in.

Rhonda Wood Chair opened the meeting and welcomed people, noting that there were some new people attending today.

The meeting focussed on important issues to Taumarunui. The Waikato DHB Update was presented with discussion on the replacement of the Taumarunui Health Bus and the Prioritisation Process.

TRANSPORT

The current bus service has been serving the local people on a daily basis for a number of years. A previous Bus driver was at the meeting and had sent a letter to the Chair listing the many issues that he had encountered during his time as the Bus driver. These included:

- Frail elderly travelling long distances to and from Hospital, leaving early in the morning and returning early evening
- Often comforting people too unwell to travel
- Inadequate facilities on the bus, this isn't friendly to disabled or fragile people, poor heating in winter and no air conditioning in summer. Frequent toilet stops - often in bushes on the way to and from Hamilton.

Waikato DHB is undertaking a review of the Transport and Accommodation Policy (TNA Policy) which looks likely to be under spent for the 07/08 financial year. This policy is centrally managed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) which means that the DHB has limited control over the allocation of the budget. The project has identified a number of barriers to people accessing financial support. These include: Difficult form filling, slowness in processing by the MoH and reimbursement back to people (waiting up to 8 weeks isn't uncommon), eligibility criteria is very restrictive, and 20c/km reimbursement isn't keeping pace with rising fuel prices. To mention a few.

The Taumarunui bus is funded directly from this fund as are a few other community transport grants to rural communities. The review identifies gaps and fragmentation in the service across the region. The Taumarunui Bus is the only such funded resource across the DHB. The DHB staff are interested in seeing what changes can be made within the Policy framework to overcome some of these problems.

***Action:** Keep the members informed with progress towards resolving these issues.*

PRIORITISATION PROCESS

Each year the Waikato DHB runs this process where community groups and service providers are encouraged to submit proposals for new funding. Prioritisation funding is an exercise where the DHB has surplus funding available for local initiatives once the minimum service coverage levels imposed on DHB's by the MoH are met. Waikato DHB has been fortunate to be in this position over the last few years. It is

expected that there will be another round commencing in July 2008. The Community Health Forum may be interested in identifying a local initiative they would like to submit for consideration.

Action: Grant to keep the Chair informed of the time-frame for this process. Rhonda may be interested in facilitating discussions for a local initiative(s.)

TAUMARUNUI HOSPITAL UPDATE

Tine Baker, Taumarunui Hospital Manager attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the range of services available from the Hospital. This was a useful presentation as it cleared up some confusion on what services were available to the local community. For instance, respite beds and palliative care services are offered at the Hospital with limited access criteria other than referral by a GP/District Nurse. Tina told the meeting “these vital services are valuable to small communities and Taumarunui Hospital is willing to be flexible around access”.

The Hospital also provides a full range of Allied Health services, which include: A full range of allied health services - Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Social Work and Laboratory and X-ray services. The District Nursing Services and Health Promotion services compliment the range of local services available on a daily basis.

Outpatient specialist/Consultant clinics are available for those more complex health issues such as diabetes, renal, cardiac, paediatric etc and these are predominantly outreached from Waikato Hospital. In many cases these services prevent the need for unnecessary travel to Hamilton. Tina says “that these services are as important to the Hospital as they are to the Community. Having specialists run clinics in Taumarunui provides a valuable learning opportunity for the local staff”. Wherever possible, the Hospital will lobby Waikato to continue providing a complete range of specialist outpatient clinics in Taumarunui where resources and safety issues permit, says Tina.

TONSILLECTOMIES

Taumarunui Hospital is to offer surgical services for all Waikato people waiting for tonsillectomy. Tina Baker announced this at the meeting this morning and said this announcement comes after discussions with Waikato Hospital around the valuable services available in rural Hospitals and their place in supporting Waikato Hospital in elective procedures like tonsillectomies. Tina says “that this is an example where rural hospitals like Taumarunui can help take the pressure of the busy Waikato Hospital”.

TAUMARUNUI BUS

A new service is being proposed as a replacement of the current Taumarunui Health Bus. Tina Baker told the meeting this morning that she had been briefed by a potential provider on a new service that would provide a bus that met disability friendly guidelines, was air conditioned and improved the current service for local people needing to attend Hamilton for health services.

Any new service needs to meet the needs of the local community. The DHB requested two or three local people to assist the DHB to identify the community’s wishes so these could be considered in the proposal for the new service.

Action: Rhonda to identify names and contact people to be involved in this.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Rural Health Services

A project focussing on sustaining local rural services was discussed by the DHB. This announcement followed a Public meeting held in Taumarunui in early June at which approx. 50 locals expressed their concerns about the state of local health services. The DHB has been considering the sustainability issues of its rural hospitals for some time, and this latest project is one step closer to working with the local community to ensure services are available when they need them.

While the DHB 'was not' rolling out a proposal at this stage, they were advising the community that work is about to commence aiming at integrating and strengthening the resilience of the local hospital and community services. It is too early yet to identify what the final model looked like, but there is interest in consolidating the local services to ensure that they worked together, supported each other and make best use of the available resources.

The Chief Executive Waikato DHB intends to have a proposal presented to the August Waikato DHB Board for their consideration. As new funding is likely to be required a proposal will also need to be submitted to the prioritisation process. Closing dates for both these activities will be before the next CHF meeting in August. A special meeting may be required to ensure local forum membership input to the plans.

Action:

1. *Progress reports were to be available at each CHF meeting.*
2. *A special meeting may be needed to ensure local participation in planning.*

Dialysis Services

People from Turangi needing dialysis services were travelling to Hamilton three days each week to receive the service. The meeting was told that the Rotorua dialysis service was unable to meet the demand for its people in Turangi. Travelling every second day to Hamilton then returning to Turangi after a minimum of 5 hours on a dialysis machine was tiring and stressful for the folk needing this service, says a spokesperson for the Turangi people.

The DHB advised that a new dialysis services hand been proposed for Te Kuiti, however there further information on this service isn't available at this time.

Action:

1. *Enquiries to the Waikato Dialysis service would be made regarding the Turangi folk needing to travel*
2. *More information is to be made available about the Te Kuiti proposal.*

Training Nurses Locally

Nurses should be able to train in their local community, at their local hospital. The meeting heard that many local people interested in nursing as a career were "put off" by the need to relocate to the city to train. This often separated families and disadvantaged people with parenting and care giver responsibilities.

A recent health careers day was well attended by approx 4,000 young people from around the region but no Health Waikato people were in attendance. This was seen as a lost opportunity in attracting young people into a health career.

The Rural Health Institute of New Zealand provides school careers support and guidance to young people expressing interest in a health career. The Institute also administers health scholarships on behalf of the Waikato DHB.

With the current shortage of health professionals and the down turn in people choosing health as a career option the local community and the DHB needed to do more to stimulate interest in this career option. Tina Baker told the meeting that return to nursing courses were available and these courses meant that local people could complete their practical component at the local Hospital.

Action: For more information about return to Nursing Options, people are encouraged to contact Tina Baker – Taumarunui Hospital Manager

Meals on Wheels Volunteers:

More volunteers are needed for this service. Local people who are unable to get out or care for themselves are reliant upon the good will of a small group of people who deliver these meals. Ageing and rising fuel costs are impacting on the number of volunteers available to continue the service. If anyone is interested in assisting as a volunteer they are encouraged to contact the Hospital.

Meeting finished at 12.midday.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 27 August 2008

10.00am- 12.00pm

Venue TBC

LAST MEETING FOR THE YEAR

Thursday 27th November 2008

10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue TBC

**ACTION LIST FROM THE RUAPEHU COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 20th JUNE 2008**

1.	Transport - Keep the members informed with progress towards resolving these issues. .	Next meeting
2.	Prioritisation Process - Grant to keep the Chair informed of the time-frame for this process. Rhonda may be interested in facilitating discussions for a local initiative(s.)	
3.	Taumarunui Bus - Rhonda to identify names and contact people to be involved in this.	Before next meeting
4.	Rural Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress reports were to be available at each CHF meeting. • A special meeting may be needed to ensure local participation in planning. 	
5.	Dialysis Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries to the Waikato Dialysis service would be made regarding the Turangi people needing to travel • More information is to be made available about the Te Kuiti proposal. 	Before next meeting Before next meeting
6.	Training nurses locally - For more information about return to Nursing Options, people are encouraged to contact Tina Baker – Taumarunui Hospital Manager.	