

Pegasus 2025

Kia atawhai ki te tangata



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Tēnā koutou katoa - Greetings to you all

June is Men's Health Month. Men live, on average, four years less than women. Men's Health Month is about encouraging men to take better care of themselves; whether that's taking better care of their nutrition and sleep, getting their lu shot, or seeing a health professional for preventative care. In this issue we chat to men who have accessed Pegasus Health services in order to take better care of their health and wellbeing.

Last month I had the privilege of attending the Pegasus Health Workforce Development Scholarship awards and meeting some of the 28 incredible recipients. Our purpose is ensuring that all people living in Canterbury lead healthy lives, and these scholarships play an integral part in making this happen.

The fact stands that Māori, Pasifika, and our culturally and linguistically diverse populations are not achieving equitable health outcomes. Supporting the creation of an equitable health workforce through these scholarships is one of the ways we work towards achieving our purpose.

June sees the beginning of Matariki. This is a time of togetherness and connection and I encourage you to spend time with friends and whānau this month as you reflect on the past year and look to what the coming months are bringing for you.

*Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā whetū o te rangi.
Let each star in the sky
shine its own light.*

MARK LIDDLE
MANUKURA /
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



SHARE YOUR STORY

If you've got a Pegasus Health story you'd like to share, email communication@pegasus.org.nz

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PEGASUS HEALTH ACUTE DEMAND SERVICE

The Acute Demand Service is all about lightening some of the load on hospital services, GPs, and patients. Under the leadership of Senior Medical Officer of Acute Demand, Dr Andrew Meads together with SMOs Dr Belinda van Gruting and Dr Martin Gardner, as well as a dedicated nursing and administrative team, Acute Demand supports patients to remain or return to the care of their GP and stay out of hospital and ED.

“We assist GPs with a lot of diagnostic work, including electrocardiogram (ECGs), blood tests or organising radiology,” says Martin. “As long as it

potentially keeps someone out of hospital, we can help. For example, we are very happy to see heart failure patients when GPs are scarce of time,” he says.

Along with support and monitoring for heart and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients, anticoagulation monitoring and other therapeutic services, such as intravenous (IV) antibiotics, acute demand is preparing to launch an atrial fibrillation pathway as well.

“Patients presenting with atrial fibrillation to the hospital, will receive acute treatment and then be handed over to us for follow up the next day to ensure their heart has returned to normal rhythm. If not, they are then referred for cardioversion. This keeps them out of a hospital bed and saves them having to return to hospital for follow-up monitoring.”

ACUTE DEMAND SERVICE HELPS PLUMBER GET BACK TO WORK

Self-employed plumber, Tom Thompson, is not looking to retire any time soon. At 67, he says he is always got to be doing something, which makes the Acute Demand Service the perfect outpatient solution for him.

Tom has been a patient of Acute Demand twice now. Ongoing health issues mean he is prone to internal infections which require IV antibiotics. On this occasion, Tom was referred to Acute Demand by Christchurch Hospital.

“I am not one for sitting still,” says Tom. “I know the hospital is a good place to be when you are not well, but after I was diagnosed and waiting for treatment, I would rather get out to you guys [Acute Demand] and travel there once a day to get my treatment,” he says.

As well as the ability to get back to work and stay productive, Tom appreciates the friendly approach of the clinical staff at the Acute Demand Service. “The staff are lovely and accommodating. They are telling me what they are doing while they are going through the procedure so it is all very clear and I know I am in good hands.”



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AVOID BURNOUT THIS WINTER

Cantabrians should try to avoid feeling guilty about prioritising themselves and regularly practice self-care to lower their risk of burnout and its potential to impact those around them, says Pegasus Health's Mental Health Clinical Team Leader, Karl Belcher.

Serious and prevalent experience of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion is caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.

"I would say globally everyone is at risk of burnout at present. For some, COVID-19 continues to loom large, and the war in Ukraine has created many global uncertainties, which puts people at further risk. We have also seen pressures locally with inflation and the rising cost of living."

When people are burnt out, the consequences for them and the wider community are significant. Burnt out individuals are at higher risk of physical and psychological issues and less likely to be well-engaged in their communities and work.

"It is not uncommon for people who are caring for others to be at higher risk of burnout. They often forget about their own needs and prioritising self-care, which is a key part of a person's well-being," he says.

For many kiwis, this does not come naturally as it is not culturally ingrained, we face the 'she'll be right' attitude which can lead to people feeling guilty or uncomfortable to prioritise their well-being.

"However, as you do in a plane you need to put on your oxygen mask before you can help others. A key concept to consider is self-compassion."

Establishing and nurturing meaningful relationships with the people and things that matter in life can be one way to protect against burnout.

Understanding who and what is important and moving towards these things will help provide more resilience and capacity to manage stress and other factors that lead to burnout.

"Kanohi ki te kanohi / face-to-face and being with others is also important. COVID-19 has reduced this, however as we begin our recovery, look for opportunities where you feel comfortable and safe to do so," Karl says.

The Mental Health Foundation provides some tips on ways to look after our wellbeing when times are tough: [Wellbeing tips](#) | [Mental Health Foundation](#)



GETTING THE FLU SHOT FOR WINTER

Getting the influenza vaccine was a no brainer for Banks Peninsula resident, Digital Capability Manager for Careerforce, Ian Moir. With the move to the orange traffic light setting and workplaces and activities opening again, Ian knows getting his flu jab is the best way to protect himself and those around him.

“I have been primarily working from home for two years now, but my workplace has opened up again and more people are returning to the office.”

Ian's role sees him travelling to Wellington often as well as frequent meetings with his team and suppliers.

“Getting the flu vaccine is not only about protecting myself but making sure that I am not going to spread any bugs to others.”

Ian chose Barrington Medical Centre's Vaccination Hub to get his vaccine. He found the process to be very quick and friendly.

“I went to Barrington on my lunch break and got my vaccine straight away with no waiting. Everyone was helpful, particularly the vaccinator who was cheerful and really put me at ease,” Ian says.



RURAL NURSE PRACTITIONER SHARES HIS PASSION FOR NURSING

With International Nurses Days being Celebrated globally last month, we sat down and had a chat to Jason Williams, Nurse Practitioner (NP) at Oxford Health to hear about his passion for nursing.

Growing up in Florida, Jason graduated from Nursing School in 1995 from the University of Florida before moving to New Zealand in 2005 to complete his Master's Degree at Massey University.

Jason has an extensive background in a variety of intensive care specialties working in hospitals in the US and New Zealand. He is currently working as a Rural Nurse Specialist at Oxford Medical Centre; an opportunity which allows him to be closer to his home and family.

"The best part about this role is the team I work with and getting to serve the community I call home."

After five years in this role, it was a massive cornerstone to becoming an NP. Becoming an NP was not an initial goal for Jason but after the passing of his wife, who also worked at Oxford Medical, he wanted to finish what she could not.

"At that time there was no formal NPTP programme, so it felt like a 'sink or swim' challenge. With great support from the Oxford Medical Centre, I completed my NP application and interview three years ago and have not been happier."

A highlight of Jason's career so far is "being able to teach and give back to future potential NP's. I enjoy sharing what I have learned over my years of nursing and seeing the future of our profession thrive," says Jason.

International Nurses Day is a "day for all of us to celebrate our profession and appreciate the contributions we have made to patient outcomes. "More importantly, knowing that no matter where you are in the world you can work almost everywhere with your skill set, whether that's the US, New Zealand, South America or even Antarctica. Our profession allows us to do anything!" says Jason.

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LOCAL OSCAR WINNER OVERCOMES PROSTATE CANCER

Mount Pleasant prostate cancer survivor Hammond Peek (Ngai Tahu) views his body like a car. Regular check-ups with his GP mean it stays in good order and major problems can be picked up and addressed early.

During a check-up in 2019, Hammond's GP detected elevated levels of PSA (prostate-specific antigen, a protein produced by both cancerous and noncancerous cells in the prostate) in a blood test used to screen for prostate cancer. The levels did not drop following a further PSA test seven weeks later, so the GP referred Hammond to a specialist, who diagnosed cancer that was contained within the prostate.

"I was keeping in touch with the GP and regularly having blood tests and digital examinations, so my doctor knew what was going on with me. These regular check-ups meant when the cancer was detected it had not spread outside the prostate. Once it gets outside [the prostate] it can be hit and miss whether it spreads throughout the body and makes treatment much tougher."

After speaking to the specialist and doing his own research into his treatment options, Hammond chose to have surgery to remove his prostate.

More than two years on from the diagnosis, the retired production sound mixer/sound recordist (and two-time Oscar winner for his work on King Kong and Lord of the Rings) says he is doing well and making use of available support from other cancer survivors and community groups such as the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

"As I went through my cancer journey, I found there were so many support groups who could 'give you the goss'. For example, I now go to a weekly fitness group where those of us recovering, and others in a different stage of their journey, get together and talk over coffee after the workout. It is so useful to talk to others with the same experiences and discuss what can be rather sensitive topics."

Hammond is grateful he had regular checks and that his GP was proactive in monitoring and referring him promptly for specialist care.

"The outcome could have been quite different without that regular contact with my GP," Hammond says.

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FORMER ERITREAN REFUGEE LEARNS HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE TIPS

As a full-time social work student and part-time worker with the Red Cross, Samuel Hidray Equbazgi struggled to prioritise his health and wellbeing. The former refugee and others from Christchurch's Eritrean community took part in a Puāwai-Kai healthy lifestyle and cooking course.

Samuel says since doing the free 8-week course he is cooking healthier food for himself and prioritising good habits such as exercise and a healthy sleep routine.

"Life was not easy but little by little I am making the progress I am wishing. So far so good."

Samuel says that he would recommend this course to anyone that is wanting to make healthier improvements in their life.

"It is every little thing that would help you improve the lifestyle that you wish to have. Besides the cooking training, there was some stuff as well like how to manage your sleep, your engagement with sport and communication. It is kind of about everything related to your health. I 100% recommend this kind of training for everyone."

Cantabrians can find out more about the course and hear stories from people like Samuel who have done it at [Puawai.org.nz](https://puawai.org.nz). You can also ask your GP to refer you for the course.

Photo below: (L - R) Zeynab Faitinga, Freweini Berhe and Samuel Equbazgi.

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PEGASUS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP CEREMONY

The ‘highlight of the year’, the Pegasus Health Workforce Development Scholarship ceremony was held at Tūranga (Christchurch Main Library) on Thursday 18 May. The scholarships were established by Pegasus Health in 2001 to support members of our priority communities in their journey to working in health care. Pegasus continued this commitment to creating an equitable health workforce to assist Aotearoa towards equitable health outcomes by awarding 28 scholarships in 2022.

In an emotional speech from keynote speaker, Suzanne Pitama, she acknowledged that achieving health equity was the responsibility of all the health workforce.

“There will be a lot of pressure on you when you graduate to meet our equity goals, but every single graduate is supposed to contribute to health equity, it does just not rest on your shoulders. So, I want to honour your dreams and aspirations for yourself. I want you to choose the field that most stimulates you, that makes you excited. Because the more you follow your own passions, the more we will retain you in our health workforce and that is really our overall goal,” says Suzanne.

Third year nursing student, Kirstyn Macdonald (Ngāti Kahungunu), knows first-hand the challenges Māori women experience.

“As a young Māori mother, I experienced discrimination from health care services and as a result I was afraid of judgment when attending the Well Child Checks which is crucial for monitoring your pēpi’s growth and development,” Kirstyn says.

“Unfortunately, I am not alone in experiencing discrimination from health

care services. Discrimination is a contributing factor to why Māori have poorer health outcomes,” she says.

This has motivated Kirstyn to study nursing, so she can have an active role in improving health disparities in Māori health.

Akerita Alatimu (Samoa) is in her second and final year of a Master of Health Science. Akerita took time to acknowledge the professionals that have worked for equity in health. “I chose this course, not only because I wanted to see change in our communities, but I also wanted to be part of that change to better our health outcomes. I know that it is not going to be easy, but we are preceded by so many warriors in our individual fields that I know it is doable with a whole lot of grit,” she says.

“

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Māori scholarship recipient, Iwitea Ataria Ivannokova, shared a whakatauki that embodies the journey her and the other recipients are on.

He manako te kōura i kore ai. Thinking about the crayfish will not make it so – to achieve your dreams, you must put the effort in.

WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

