

Autumn 2020

HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY. LIVING WITH COVID-19 ON THE PENINSULA.

Dear community,

There's nothing like a global pandemic to show us how quickly our world can change and call into question our vulnerability. This Autumn update is not the content we had intended to bring you. There are so many positive strides being made at Akaroa Health it seems a shame not to celebrate them however it is more important that you feel entirely informed of the approach we are, and will be, taking to the management of COVID-19.

We have had to consider many factors to ensure the health of our residents, patients, team and broader community. I would like to reassure you that the Akaroa Health team is well versed in COVID-19 best practice and the policies are in place to move swiftly in the event of a community outbreak.

Firstly, several tests have been undertaken and the Ministry of Health testing procedure, and subsequent analysis and results take 24 hours. We are well equipped with test kits and Personal Protective Equipment thanks to Waitaha Primary Health Organisation (PHO).

Should anyone test positive for COVID-19 they will be monitored in isolation at home. If a case becomes critical we will draw on the excellent preparation of the CDHB and transfer them by ambulance to hospital in Christchurch rather than attempt to contain the virus in our premises.

There has been some concern over the Ruby Princess ship that berthed here on March 13. We are now outside of the at risk period and it is unlikely we will see any cases from this.

We are taking every precaution to protect the health of our most vulnerable residents and community. The residential care wing is now sealed off from the GP practice and the residents are well briefed on COVID-19 and are feeling safe and secure. Where possible consultations are being held by phone and social distancing will be practised throughout the Centre.

Twice a week I'm speaking with our Community Wellness Group with representatives from Police, Heartlands, Ōnuku, the Board and Trust to ensure we are looking out for our most vulnerable community members at this time.

If there's one thing I've come to value in this community it's our ability to look out for each other. A virus doesn't discriminate. Let's make sure we don't either. Be kind and call if you have any concerns.

Jenni Masters
General Manager, Akaroa Health Centre



Best COVID-19 information.
Visit the website or call 0800 358 5453.

Contact details

Please remember - call before visiting the Akaroa Health Centre, even after hours: 304 7004

Emergency: Call 111

Book an appointment / talk to a resident: 304 7004

email: reception@akaroahealth.nz

Website: www.akaroahealth.co.nz



Doctor Brandon Rickards.
Working alongside Drs Wilson & London

New Doctor brings teaching ethos.

We welcome Dr Brandon Rickards to the team over coming months. Dr Rickards has vast experience as a rural GP in New Zealand, Australia the UK and Pacific Islands.

New Zealand born and trained Dr Rickards is keen to see other young doctors flourish in General Practice. For the last 15 years has been a teacher with the Royal NZ College of GP's and the University of Otago's School of Medicine. He's looking forward to sharing this teaching ethos at the Health Centre. You'll find Dr Rickards at the Health Centre from Monday through to Thursday.



Please be kind.
We appreciate your support of our team at this challenging time.

COVID-19 response

Like the rest of New Zealand's health system, Akaroa Health Centre has been preparing for potential COVID-19 cases. Here's what you need to know about the way we are operating to ensure the health of our residents and community:

- Contact time in the Health Centre is being minimised to reduce potential transmission.
- It is important that all your health concerns are seen to. If you are unwell, call the Health Centre. You may be given a time when the GP will phone you to complete a consultation, or you might speak to the Practice Nurse (Biddy or Rebecca) first. If you require medications, we will send the prescription to the pharmacy for collection.
- If the GP decides you need to be seen or have tests at the Health Centre:
 - Please arrive on time – not early.
 - Call us from your car
 - We'll call when the GP/nurse is available.
 - At the front door please sanitise your hands
 - Wave to Shirley or Fiona to be let in.
 - If no staff are visible use the doorbell.
- If you are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 we will likely see you in your car or in the soon to be delivered portacom. The portacom, courtesy of Waitaha PHO, will be used to ensure those being assessed can be seen outside the facility. Please follow the instructions of staff who will be fitted out in PPE. We may ask you to wear a mask to protect our healthcare workers.

- District nursing continues but we are more carefully assessing the requirement for a home visit or a telephone visit.
- **Afterhours:** We continue to provide 24/7 health services. Please call first and do not just turn up. During the weekends we have the fabulous Tom Murphy, Sheena MacLeod or John Dean on call.

Local Health Centre updates.

The COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, as everywhere, is rapidly evolving. We are posting relevant information on the Akaroa Health facebook page (facebook.com/akaroahealth) and suggest you follow this page to make sure you are kept up to date. If someone you know is not using social media, please pass on relevant information.

Screening Services on hold.

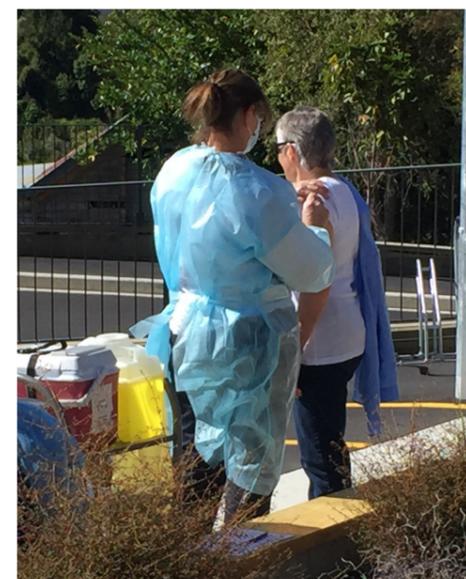
Screening services across the country are on hold as are visiting clinicians. The Health Centre will contact you once these recommence to ensure you're reminded when due.

Flu Vaccinations.

The advance run of influenza vaccines were issued to those most vulnerable in late March. The next lot are expected the week of the 13th of April. Rest assured they will be coming.

Fiona or Shirley will contact those of you who have expressed a desire to have a vaccine with a date and time once we have them in our fridge.

Please do not call the practice asking about influenza vaccinations. We understand the heightened interest in vaccination this year however Fiona and Shirley are busy with calls from people who are unwell.



Flu vaccinations.
A first - vaccinations in the parking lot.

A good time to enrol.

Recently we've seen a spike in new enrolments at the Akaroa Health Centre as people look to secure healthcare nearby. We are always happy to enrol new patients and suggest you contact Shirley or Fiona on 304 7004 to get the process started.

Akaroa Community Health Trust Update

Word from the Chair.

Dear Community,

Firstly, I do hope you're all looking after yourselves and your loved ones as best as possible through these trying and extraordinary times. Rarely do we all experience something new at the same time. Lockdown will challenge every single one of us in different ways - it's a time of great uncertainty and this alone will likely affect both our physical and emotional wellbeing.

It is timely to pay tribute to an exceptional community. Collectively you have ensured we have the facilities and team of professionals to face COVID-19. In 2010/11 earthquakes proved a catalyst for the integration of health services into the model we have today. We could not have seen a global pandemic on the horizon, however today's facility and model of care puts us in a strong position to ensure the health of the Akaroa and Bays community is protected as much as possible at this time.

Of course, not everyone in our community will be aware of the full history, nor the many individuals and organisations involved and historic information can be found at (www.akaroahealth.com/updates).

Akaroa Health Limited (AHL) Board of Directors recently reported to the Akaroa Community Health Trust that in its first year of operation as an integrated community owned and operated venture, AHL is in good financial health. Many of the unknown variables around contracts, patient numbers and the benefits of integrated services are now more certain and we are pleased to be operating at what we believe are sustainable levels. However, it is still early days and we are crucially aware of the potential financial impact of COVID-19, so will be making as much provision for that as we can.

At the end of the day, quality healthcare is largely dependent on people. I would like to express the Trust's thanks to every individual working at Akaroa Health. Healthcare professionals, carers, cooks, cleaners and our front line reception team - your excellence in your profession is to be applauded. Leadership at a time like this is so crucial and General Manager Jenni Masters' precision planning is a great source of confidence to us all. The specialist expertise of our Directors is coming to the fore with Director Mark Newsome able to contribute directly to Akaroa Health's response as well assisting the CDHB's COVID-19 response by taking a role in the Emergency Control Centre assisting with operations. Mark's Master of Public Health dissertation was on pandemic planning and response.

Beyond the immediate health team, our community has our invaluable Kerry Little at Heartlands, who is coordinating the response to our community's most

vulnerable people, alongside Health Centre personnel, Onuku representatives and our competent and compassionate frontline first responders.

While it is impossible not to focus on today's COVID-19 response, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Guardians of Akaroa Hospital for seeking to adapt its Constitution to support all the activities of the new Health Centre, and the generous donors who will ensure we have solar power and a back-up generator in the very near future. With your foresight we are better equipped for the future.

While we can't support each other in person, let's use our technology to share kindness, support and stay connected.

Gordon Boxall
Chair, Akaroa Community Health Trust



Say it with Gelato.
French Bay House gelato brings good cheer going into lockdown.

Community Wellbeing Group looking out for most in need.

When it feels like the only certainty is uncertainty it is heartening to know that there is a newly formed Community Wellbeing Group looking out for our most vulnerable members of the community.

Twice a week, via Zoom calls, Kerry Little pulls together people from our Police, Health Centre, District Nursing, Ōnuku's Whānau Ora (family health), and Akaroa Health Limited /Akaroa Community Health Trust to proactively look at vulnerable groups in our community and how to coordinate a response.

Kerry says "it's about making sure people are OK, connected and not feeling alone, and that we work together to best care for our community, checking in on one another, being kind and offering support where we can." If you have concerns about anyone in our community ring 304 8659 or text 0224023528 or email heartlands.coordinator@gmail.com.

Guardians of Akaroa Health.

For over 25 years The Guardians of Akaroa Hospital have rallied to raise funds for health equipment of benefit to our community.

Over recent months the Guardians have purchased a much needed Tympanometer, used to test the condition of the middle ear, a Sara Steady to support standing and mobility of residents, an infusion pump to deliver fluids such as nutrients and medications to a patient in controlled amounts, and cleaning trolleys. These items could not be funded without the support of the Guardians.

President Allison Crow says "on behalf of our hard-working committee, I wish to thank the community for their generous support of our efforts. We continue to raise funds for the purchase of items, identified by Jenni Masters and her staff, that make a significant difference to the quality of care at the Health Centre."

The Guardians raise funds through an annual subscription (\$10) and donations. If you would like to contribute, please contact Treasurer Lee-Anne Ketchen 027 277 4447 or ketchnz@yahoo.com.



The new Sara Steady.
Jenni models the Guardians latest buy.

Generous donation and perseverance powers solar.

The vision and tenacity of a member of our community have secured solar power for the Akaroa Health Centre. Not a component of the original plans for the building, solar held the potential to considerably reduce the Health Centre power bill. The installation of solar panels at Ōnuku reduced the Marae power bill by almost 50% and we expect the likely impact at Akaroa Health would be equally significant.

After a lengthy process CDHB approval has been granted and we look forward to seeing installation later in the year.

Sincere thanks to the donor and those who have ably assisted them.

Generator secured.

Some of you may know it has been challenging to secure funds to purchase a back up generator for Akaroa Health.

We are pleased that, with funding provided by a local farmer and Orion who have also agreed to manage the installation and maintenance a portable (trailer based) generator can be purchased.

This will be housed near the Health Centre and its installation, upkeep and alternative community use is being developed in association with Armstrong Electrical, the Motor Garage and the Fire Brigade. We are deeply grateful for this peace of mind and thank all involved.

Akaroa Area School remote counselling on offer for students and parents.

Akaroa Area School's Counsellor Mr Frank Wood is available by email (frank.wood@xtra.co.nz) during the lockdown period. You or your children are able to contact him to talk about anything that might be worrying you.

Need to talk helpline.

NEED TO TALK?

1737

free call or text any time

1737 is New Zealand's national mental health and addictions helpline number. 1737 is run as part of the National Telehealth Service with the same trained mental health professionals who currently respond to mental health and addiction helplines (depression, gambling and alcohol drug helplines) on hand to offer support 24/7.

Manage my Health app.

The Health Centre now has access to the Manage My Health app. It can be downloaded from the appstore and acts as a portal for your individual health information. Through this, you will be able to request repeat prescriptions instead of calling. If you would like to access this please email Shirley and Fiona on reception@akaroahealth.nz.

