

31 May 2018

For immediate release

Stop smoking training programme aimed at pregnant women

A new Waitemata DHB and Auckland DHB training initiative for health professionals will ultimately connect pregnant smokers with local services to help them quit.

The Effective Stop Smoking Conversations with Pregnant Women Online Programme was launched this morning at North Shore Hospital to celebrate World Smokefree Day and includes videos, advice and pointers for all health professionals who work with women during pregnancy and through the immediate post-natal period.

It is especially tailored to help them with conversations in Maori and Pacific communities where smoking rates are disproportionately higher than the rest of the population – particularly when the women being spoken with are not particularly open to the idea of quitting.

“The idea is to give health professionals some extra help to identify any barriers pregnant women have to quitting smoking,” Project Clinical Lead and Public Health Registrar Dr Felicity Williamson says.

“It will also help them turn various conversational cues into opportunities to discuss stopping smoking.

“Ultimately it gives them some additional tools to help refer more women to local stop smoking services – empowering them to make a potentially life-saving decision for themselves and their babies.”

The comprehensive and interactive training package will be made available to a diverse range of health sector workers, including GPs, midwives, Leading Maternity Carers, Plunket and family planning workers.

Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says Ministry of Health figures collated between 2011 and 2015 show around 1000 pregnant smokers register with maternity providers across Waitemata and Auckland DHBs every year. Around three quarters of them are of Maori or Pacific ethnicity.

“Overall smoking rates within our population are reducing and this programme further complements the initiatives already in action to help bring those numbers down even further. Waitemata, for example, recognises smoking as a leading factor in SUDI rates that are still disproportionately higher nationwide among Māori.

“Smoking reduction is therefore a major part of its SUDI prevention strategy – along with education about the dangers of bed sharing with babies. Waitemata’s proactive work in this area is part of the reason why there has been a 63% drop in Māori infant mortality across its catchment since 2001 – well ahead of the national 30% decline.”

Waitemata DHB and Auckland DHB Funding and Planning Project Manager Maria Lafaele says the training addresses the kinds of issues she has seen while working with pregnant women and mums in the community.

“This will contribute further to better health outcomes for our population – safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our mothers and giving their babies the best possible start to life,” she says.

CAP: Waitemata DHB and Auckland DHB Funding and Planning Project Manager Maria Lafaele pictured during today’s launch

Ends

For further information, contact:

Waitemata DHB Media Line

Ph. 4871276