

17 May, 2019

### **Independent external review following deaths at mental health inpatient unit**

Waitematā DHB has announced an immediate independent external review of its He Puna Waiora inpatient mental health unit after the deaths of two patients in the unit this week.

The Acting Director of the DHB's Mental Health Services, Dr Kevin Cleary, said the DHB extended its deepest sympathies to the families of those who had died of suicide.

"These families have entrusted their loved ones to our care and it is important that they have answers about any factors contributing to their deaths," Dr Cleary said.

"We believe tragic events like this should never happen in an inpatient unit and we have quickly moved to commission this external review."

The review will be totally independent of Waitematā DHB. It will focus on how the He Puna Waiora unit is functioning clinically, its governance and any issues relating to the facility itself.

"Maintaining a high level of public confidence in our care and in our facilities is crucial. We believe this review will identify any factors so we can minimise risks for patients in the future," Dr Cleary said.

The DHB has contacted the families of both patients to advise them of the review. Both deaths are subject to separate independent external expert reviews and coronial investigations.

**Ends.**

**For further information, contact:**

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