



16 April, 2020

120 Māori community health workers to be deployed to assist with COVID-19 response

Up to 120 new community health workers will support whānau wellbeing during and post the COVID-19 outbreak as part of a partnership between the Northern Region DHBs (Northland, Waitematā, Auckland and Counties Manukau), iwi and Māori health providers.

Dr Dale Bramley, Waitematā DHB CEO and Northern Region lead CEO for emergency planning, says the mission of this Ngā Kaimanaaki service is to ensure whānau are safe, protected and well in their homes and communities.

The first phase of the service, which is about to get underway, involves the Northern Region DHBs working with Māori health providers such as Te Whānau O Waipareira, Te Whare Tiaki Trust, Orakei Health and Ngāti Hine Health Trust, to employ 60 full-time equivalent kaimanaaki (which could be up to 120 people on a 0.5 FTE basis). With guidance from Māori clinical leadership, the kaimanaaki will engage with some of the most vulnerable whānau and communities across Auckland and Northland.

The kaimanaaki are made up of community leaders and members who will boost the Northern Region DHBs' existing Māori health workforce and services in the community. They are drawn from the following iwi: Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri, Ngāi Takoto, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāpuhi, Whaingāroa, Ngāti Whātua, Ngātiwai and Tainui.

Dr Bramley says: "Our Māori communities contain many people we know will be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Through our Ngā Kaimanaaki service, we are working closely with iwi, Hapu, and Māori providers in the health and social sectors to understand the needs of their whānau and to then to be able to respond to those needs.

"We would like to recognise the huge amount of work that has already been undertaken by local iwi and Māori providers. The Ngā Kaimanaaki service will help ensure we support them the best way we can in the weeks ahead."

The kaimanaaki will work within their local communities to identify whānau who may require additional support.

Each kaimanaaki will be trained to sensitively and safely undertake a wellbeing assessment and questionnaire with these whānau to determine what support they need in the immediate and longer term. The kaimanaaki will then coordinate the care that's needed or help whānau to access the services that will best support them.

The kaimanaaki will also play a key role in providing relevant information about COVID-19 to whānau, offering guidance around protecting themselves against infection and giving advice about how to stay well in their homes by building healthy habits for the whole whānau.

Northern Region Health Coordination Centre Māori Health lead Aroha Haggie said: “Our decision to engage kaimanaaki is based on feedback about what will work best and recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a dramatic impact on whānau.

“This approach will support and enable whānau through and post the pandemic by identifying and taking care of immediate health, social and household needs.”

- Ends -

Notes for editors

The Northland and Auckland DHBs are operating a regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC). As part of the NRHCC, a regional Māori Response Team has been established by the DHBs’ Māori Health leadership to meet the needs of Māori communities during the pandemic.

Media contact

NRHCC media line: 09 375 3499