



**Waitemata**  
District Health Board  
**Best Care for Everyone**

**Communications Dept.  
Corporate Office**  
*Level 2, 15 Shea Terrace  
Private Bag 93-503,  
Takapuna  
Auckland 0740  
Telephone: 09 486 8955*

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### **Herceptin treatment close to home for Waitemata DHB patients**

Breast cancer patient Michelle Jackson from Snell's Beach used to drive for over an hour each way to have Herceptin infusion treatment at Auckland City Hospital.

Now she receives it closer to home, courtesy of Waitemata DHB.

Herceptin is offered to women with HER-2 positive breast cancer.

Its availability since August at North Shore Hospital is part of an ongoing drive by Waitemata DHB to meet the needs of a fast-growing population, deliver better patient outcomes and enhance patient experience.

HER-2 positive breast cancer patients living in the former Rodney District, North Shore and West Auckland areas previously travelled to Auckland City for treatment.

The new local service has cut travel times and added a previously-unseen level of convenience for patients.

Michelle was diagnosed with HER-2 positive breast cancer a year ago and says the road trip to Auckland – combined with traffic congestion – added to her stress levels.

"I had my surgery and my follow-up at North Shore Hospital but then had to have chemotherapy, radiotherapy and my initial Herceptin treatment at Auckland Hospital. That's a 140km-round trip and a long day for anyone, let alone someone going through what I was going through," she says.

Michelle's travel was reduced by around a third once the treatment became available at North Shore Hospital – minimising the disruption to her normal daily schedule.

"I wanted to stay as routine as possible," she says. "That was going to help me get better faster. I didn't want to dwell on the cancer; I just wanted to get better.

"Being able to have treatment closer to home, in an environment that is bright, warm and friendly really does make a real difference."

Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says about 350 people from Waitemata are expected to be diagnosed with various types of breast cancer this year.

“Approximately one-third of them will be HER-2 positive and therefore offered Herceptin treatment,” he says.

“Our population is growing at a phenomenal rate and demand for this kind of service will also rise as numbers increase. We have an organisational promise to deliver best care for everyone and to improve the experience of patients in our care. This particular service is directly aligned to these aspirations.”

Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist Anne Norris says Herceptin treatment is initially given with chemotherapy.

It then continues without chemotherapy for up to a year and is administered once every three weeks.

Each session takes around 75 minutes to complete.

She says staff welcomed the opportunity to administer the treatment to patients in the local community after going through a robust training process.

“It is very rewarding for them to be working with this group of patients,” she says.

**Caption:** Michelle Jackson from Snells Beach was the first person to receive Herceptin treatment at North Shore Hospital after its introduction there in August.

**Ends**