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**9 August 2018**

### **All hands on deck when it comes to hygiene**

A workplace culture with patient safety at its heart has helped Waitemata District Health Board achieve the country's highest score in hand hygiene.

Waitemata DHB achieved a 90.3% compliance rate between April and June 2018 across more than 14,000 hand hygiene 'moments' – such as before and after touching a patient – that were audited as part of the Health Quality & Safety Commission's Hand Hygiene New Zealand programme.

Even better, the score for June alone was 91%, well above the national target of 80%, and a new Waitemata record.

"Hand hygiene is one of many metrics we measure as part of our focus on delivering better outcomes for patients," says Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley. "And these incredible scores are the direct result of our ongoing efforts to improve patient safety. Clean hands help to reduce any risk of infection that may be harmful to our patients and detrimental to their recovery."

Central to the success of Waitemata's programme has been the recruitment and hard work of 162 auditors, including doctors, across all clinical areas who monitor compliance and help to keep hand hygiene front of mind at a department level.

"Maintaining the highest levels of hand hygiene is part of our commitment to providing a safe environment and the best care to our patients. It is great to see the hard work of so many dedicated people come to fruition and we will continue to look for further ways to make progress. This is just too important," says Dr Bramley.

Patient safety is central to a number of other Waitemata DHB initiatives, including the launch of electronic systems for referrals, recording vitals and prescribing medication. All ensure that patients get prompt care while significantly reducing the risk of human error. A medication safety campaign is also well underway. The campaign encourages patients to ask questions if they are feeling confused or uncertain about what they've been prescribed.

Waitemata will join other DHBs across the country participating in Patient Safety Week (4–10 November) to raise public awareness around the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of infections within healthcare facilities and keeping patients safe.

For more information on the national Hand Hygiene Compliance programme, visit:  
<http://www.hqsc.govt.nz>

**ENDS**

**For further information, contact:** Waitemata DHB Media Line (09) 487 1276