



5 May, 2020

International day of the Midwife (Tuesday, 5 May) –extraordinary efforts during pandemic

Waitematā DHB midwives have adapted quickly to life in the face of COVID-19 – using innovation and technology to support women, their babies and families through the various stages of antenatal, birthing and postnatal care.

Today is the International Day of the Midwife and Rebecca Eade, Midwife Manager Community at Waitematā DHB, says staff have shown incredible adaptability and resilience throughout the pandemic.

“None of us had any experience of anything like this but we had to act quickly and work together. We developed new and innovative ways to provide care for women and families. The compassion and innovation staff showed during this time is incredible.”

Midwives are one of the few professional groups that have been making home visits during the lockdown period - leaving the safety of their bubbles to ensure women are receiving the essential care they need to keep themselves and their babies healthy. They have been finding new ways to connect outside of essential visits to minimise the need for close contact. These have included more telephone consultations.

“Women really like to be able to catch-up with their midwife by phone, rather than leave the safety of their bubble to come to a clinic. This approach has been so successful we are planning to continue with some of these telehealth appointments into the future,” Rebecca says.

COVID-19 restrictions have meant only one support person can attend a birth so the use of video calls has become invaluable in maternity wards by allowing other family members to share the joy of welcoming new babies.

“More so than ever we feel our role is also to provide emotional support for pregnant women, this is an anxious time for women especially as they get closer to the birth” Rebecca says. “We make sure they know we have a plan and that we are there to provide the safest possible care for them. Women have shown great understanding that everything we are doing is to keep them safe, as well as our staff.”

A dedicated 24-hour line, 0800askmidwife, has been established to support women who have been choosing to go home from hospital earlier than usual. This midwifery advice line is providing breastfeeding, baby care and health advice up to six weeks after the birth of the baby.

Over 600 babies have been born in the Waitematā DHB area since the Alert Level 4 started.

Ends.

For further information, contact:

Waitematā DHB Media Line, ph. 4871276