



Media Release

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Support for Hawke's Bay public health workers

Public Health Association
Health Promotion Forum
New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine

The Public Health Association, Health Promotion Forum and New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine express their moral support for health protection officers and public health officials in Hawke's Bay during which they say must be a difficult and trying time.

"Whenever there's a disease outbreak or public health disaster of the magnitude of the water problem in Havelock North, you can be sure public health officials are feeling the burden immensely," says Public Health Association Chief Executive Warren Lindberg.

"While politicians and senior officials have a responsibility to identify the cause and prevent it from happening again, we know both Council staff and DHB public health staff are working diligently around the clock to find the cause of the infection, to keep tabs on the spread of illness, and to ensure local communities are informed about what they need do to avoid getting sick."

Health Promotion Forum Chair Ana Apatu, who lives in Hawke's Bay, said often the public were unaware of the vital role population health teams play, but that it was times like these that the work they're paid to do comes to the fore.

"This is not a time to be casting blame around. The health and wellbeing of the population is a crucial goal that sits well above the hurly burly of politics. If things have gone wrong then a top priority needs to be ensuring there are sufficient resources allocated so DHBs and local authorities can work together and have the capacity to ensure something like this never happens again."

New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine General Manager Jane Dancer said this was a time when we need to acknowledge the skill and dedication of the public health teams dealing with the outbreak.

"It is an intense and stressful time as they work to reduce the impact of the campylobacter contamination, and we should be thanking them for the vital work they are doing."

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