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Welcome

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi o ngā hau e whā, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Welcome to the September edition of the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy Newsletter.

One of the six national priority areas identified in the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy is suicide and deliberate self-harm.

Unfortunately New Zealand, in comparison with other countries, has a high rate of suicide. In 1998 a national youth suicide prevention strategy was launched in an attempt to reduce the climbing numbers of young New Zealanders taking their own lives. The two branches of the strategy, In Our Hands and Kia Piki te Ora o te Taitamariki, have recently been evaluated. There is more information further on in the newsletter outlining the progress made and the initiatives developed and delivered to New Zealand communities.

The encouraging news is that the suicide rate has been trending downwards over the past few years. This gives us some indication that the efforts we have made in the suicide prevention area have been useful. However, the loss of around 500 lives each year is still unacceptable and there is more the Government and the community can be working on together to reduce this loss. The 2001 statistics, which were released by my office on 1 April, confirm that suicide is not an issue confined solely to youth, and the development of an all-ages suicide prevention strategy responds to the needs of the whole population. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth Development are leading the development of the all-ages strategy in consultation and collaboration with researchers, community organisations and mental health experts.

The successful development and implementation of the strategy in the near future are critical for us to ensure the number of suicides, associated grief and social costs are reduced.

Hon Jim Anderton

Safe Active Communities get working

Agencies and community organisations are joining forces in the Waimakariri District to promote 'wellbeing' under the banner of 'Safe Active Communities'.

Between September and November 2004 residents in the district will be able to participate in activities focusing on safety, physical activity, nutrition, neighbourhood support and mental health awareness. They'll also be able to celebrate International Walk to School Day, Children's Day, Push Play Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Heart Week and Neighbourhood Support Week – as well as join in the Safekids campaign.

Planned events include:

- a healthy lifestyles expo to promote physical wellbeing
- a campaign on fitting smoke alarms and changing smoke alarm batteries
- a production of a video by local school children for school children around burns and scalds
- a farm safety package for schools, written by local school principals
- a campaign encouraging 30 minutes a day of physical exercise over a six-week period.

The campaign will end with an 'old fashioned family picnic' during Neighbourhood Support Week, with a focus on 'bringing communities together'. Ice-cream tents, egg and spoon races and sack races will dominate the event, which will also promote safety messages via displays and information.

For more information

- Contact Sandra James, tel: 03 313 6136, email: sandra@wmk.govt.nz.

Taranaki tackles injury issues

The Taranaki region is taking injury prevention seriously through 'New Plymouth injurySafe' (NPIS), an injury prevention coalition comprising representatives of Kidsafe Taranaki, the Health Promotion Unit of Taranaki District Health Board, Māori development organisation Tui Ora, New Plymouth District Council and ACC.

NPIS aims to ensure that the injury priorities of the New Plymouth district (and the wider Taranaki region) are addressed by maintaining an overview of injury issues and helping to develop appropriate injury prevention projects.

Four years ago, with funding from ACC, it conducted extensive research into where the people of Taranaki saw a need for injury prevention work. Perhaps not surprisingly, it found that the community's perceptions were consistent with injury data.

Based on this information, NPIS has gone on to instigate and/or support programmes on issues ranging from falls to alcohol-related problems and projects addressing injury priorities for the region's rural population. Some of the programmes undertaken in Taranaki include:

- 0-4 Falls - Parent/caregiver group sessions
- Falls from horses (10-16 years)
- Tai Chi (65+ falls prevention) and awareness raising
- Think before you buy under 18's drink (focusing on sports clubs)
- Rugby Club Health and Safety Audits
- Down with speed
- Drive fatigue
- Motorcycle safety.

These programmes are delivered by a variety of organisations such as ACC (ThinkSafe Community Projects), Kidsafe Taranaki, Agriculture New Zealand, Safer Community Council, Taranaki Rugby Football Union and Roadsafes Taranaki.

ACC's annual Safety Audit statistics show that Taranaki has recorded the greatest decrease of moderate to serious injuries in the country, down 7%.

With such good progress to report, New Plymouth District is considering applying for accreditation as a World Health Organisation 'Safe Community' – an important step towards ongoing sustainability and stronger collaboration within the region. It also recently supported the New Plymouth District Council in hosting an injury prevention symposium, which was an excellent opportunity to encourage council and community ownership of public safety initiatives. It is now planning a follow-up workshop for key Council representatives.

For more information

- Contact Kath Forde at ACC (email: kath.forde@acc.co.nz) or Brenda Archer at Health Promotion (email: brenda.archer@tdhb.org.nz) or Dr Alan Parson at Kidsafe Taranaki (email: alan.parsons@tdhb.org.nz).



International award for injury prevention specialist

Our congratulations go to Professor John Langley, Director of the University of Otago's Injury Prevention Research Unit, who has been honoured with the American Public Health Association, Injury Control and Emergency Health Services International Distinguished Career Award.

Professor Langley is only the fifth person in the world to receive one of these awards and the first New Zealander. It recognises his

outstanding dedication and leadership in injury prevention.



Improving water safety in Auckland

In 2000, a Ministry of Health report on barriers to injury prevention stated that the coordination of water safety in the Auckland region was "working well". WaterSafe Auckland congratulates its stakeholders on continuing to work collaboratively in building a water safety culture across the aquatically blessed region.

According to WaterSafe Auckland, the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy's (NZIPS's) objectives and actions provide a strong foundation for ensuring that current and future initiatives continue to 'make a difference'. Water safety initiatives, it says, can only succeed through partnerships across the safety and aquatic sectors.

For people involved in the 'Community Injury Prevention Projects' water safety initiatives, the link with the NZIPS has both added value to and raised awareness of drowning prevention issues.

In one initiative, local councils have committed to the 'Your Pool Your Responsibility' project, which covers child safety issues, pool fencing and a coordinated approach for pool compliance staff. This work dovetails neatly with the NZIPS objectives of developing safe environments and enhancing the legislative and policy framework - and points to the Strategy's usefulness as a working tool for injury prevention.

In another initiative, new immigrant communities have recognised the growing drowning statistics in their communities. They have developed resources to address this problem and have also produced a child-centred education kit for pre-schoolers.

WaterSafe Auckland intends to build on these projects throughout 2004/05, including working with ACC on developing the Drowning Prevention Strategy.

For more information

- Contact Project Manager Teresa Stanley, WaterSafe Auckland (tel: 09 306 0809, email: Teresa.Stanley@watersafe.org.nz).
- Email watersafe.ak@xtra.co.nz.
- Visit www.watersafe.org.nz.

Addressing suicide in New Zealand

The recently released 2001 suicide statistics show that while New Zealand's suicide rate is trending downwards, we are still losing on average 500 lives a year.

In response to this, the Ministries of Health and Youth Development are working together to develop a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention across all age groups. Their draft strategy is expected to be ready for public consultation by February 2005, with the final strategy ready for Government consideration and sign-off by July 2005.

We can already report progress – the Ministerial Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention has recently approved a framework for the strategy, which was developed after discussions with key stakeholders and government agencies, analysis of the research evidence, and a review of overseas national strategies. The framework also builds on the widespread stakeholder support for the New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and the findings of its evaluation.

A public health approach

The framework for the new all-ages suicide prevention strategy is based on a public health approach, defined as "the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society".

This approach involves considering epidemiological and other evidence on the risk and protective factors for suicide. It also acknowledges the need for interventions that target high-risk populations and individuals and address the whole spectrum of causation and prevention at the population level, including social and economic contributions to suicide.

Māori needs will be addressed by applying the concept of whanau ora outlined in He Korowai Oranga – Māori Health Strategy. Other ethnic populations' needs, in particular those of Pacific peoples, will be addressed, for example, by promoting the development of culturally relevant services and enabling communities to develop their own initiatives.

The Ministry of Youth Development will continue to lead and coordinate the implementation of the New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy until the all-ages suicide prevention strategy has been launched. It has also begun to develop specific suicide prevention initiatives that span all ages.

Other initiatives

In Budget 2003, the Government announced funding for the development of support for families, whanau and significant others bereaved by suicide or a suicide attempt.

Research in the first year of this project has resulted in a set of programme proposals that will be further developed during 2004/05. These proposals focus on:

- improving information
- training service providers
- piloting and evaluating post-vention and post-attempt services
- developing opportunities for future research and evaluation to increase our understanding of effective support to people bereaved by suicide or a suicide attempt.

Budget 2004 also invested in suicide prevention across all age groups. This will see Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand (SPINZ; www.spinz.org.nz) expand its service to include information provision across all age groups. SPINZ will also work with Lifeline Auckland to deliver Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), a programme that provides practical help for community caregivers in responding to the immediate risk of suicide.

Budget 2004 also invested in new funds for implementing the 'emergency departments and mental health services guideline' on assessing and managing people across all ages at risk of suicide. Funds were also identified to enable the Ministry of Health to undertake in 2004/05 a comprehensive planning and design exercise to establish a major initiative to combat depression across the population, recognising that this is the largest single risk factor for suicide and that it has been under-recognised and under-treated.

ACC have contracted the Injury Prevention Research Centre at the University of Auckland to develop an evidence-based brief intervention resource for individuals having attempted suicide. The goal of this initiative is to reduce the risk of subsequent attempts. To inform the development of this intervention resource, an advisory group has been formed comprising representatives from government agencies such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth Development, leading suicide researchers, and members of the Pacific and Māori communities. While only one advisory meeting has been undertaken to date, it is suggested that the brief intervention consist of 4-5 sessions employing problem-solving therapy. It is intended, contingent on ethical approval, that this brief intervention be pilot tested in North Shore District Health Board between November 2004 to May 2005, with a 'managed' roll-out to be considered by June/July 2005.

For more information

- Contact John Wren at the Ministry of Health (email: john_wren@moh.govt.nz), Sue van Daatselaar at the Ministry of Youth Development (email: sue.vandaatselaar014@myd.govt.nz) or Sally Wills at ACC (email: sally.wills@acc.co.nz)



Reducing injury in Auckland city

A programme that aims to reduce the number and severity of injuries amongst people who live, work and play in Auckland city was launched in style on 2 June 2004.

Communities Living Injury Free, covering the area from Otahuhu to Avondale and the eastern suburbs, was launched complete with its own logo, website and branding.

More than 100 guests gathered to hear the injury prevention message, including representatives from SafeKids, the Child Safety Foundation, Plunket, WaterSafe Auckland, Age Concern, Alcohol Healthwatch, the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Fire Service, Housing New Zealand, primary health organisations, the Auckland District Health Board, ACC, local Māori and Pacific Island health providers, new settler groups and key researchers and academics specialising in the area.

The event provided an ideal opportunity for people working with Auckland City on injury prevention initiatives to share their experiences and knowledge as well as celebrate successes and achievements.

Funded by the Ministry of Health and administered by Auckland City Council's Community Development Division, Communities Living Injury Free will eventually involve all of Auckland's diverse communities in raising awareness of and reducing the amount and severity of injuries in the Auckland city area.

For more information

- Visit the Communities Living Injury Free website at www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/injuryfree.
- Contact Programme Coordinator Catherine Gilhooly (tel: [09] 353 9643, email: catherine.gilhooly@aucklandcity.govt.nz).

Report on serious injury indicators

The New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy's Secretariat recently commissioned the Injury Prevention Research Unit at Otago University to develop outcome indicators for all serious injuries, including the six national injury prevention priority areas. This will provide for the ability to determine if New Zealand's injury performance is improving overall and in the six priority areas.

The resulting draft report highlights the need for valid and reliable indicators, identifies the existing national indicators for all injuries and the national priority areas, and assesses their validity.

The draft report was presented to around 40 people in Wellington on 14 July. They included representatives from lead agencies, the Injury Prevention Network Aotearoa New Zealand, the Injury Prevention Research Centre (Auckland University), the Stakeholders' Reference Group and the Expert Advisory Panel.

The report has generated much interest and debate on the difficulties and challenges in ascertaining and using reliable and valid indicators. The final report is due in early September and will be available on the NZIPS website.

A strategy for workplace health and safety

The Workplace Health and Safety Strategy for New Zealand to 2015, currently under development, will provide a national vision and strategic direction for workplace health and safety over the next 10 years.

Public consultation has started and will continue to the end of October. For a copy of the draft Strategy and a Submission Booklet, simply visit www.whss.govt.nz – or, if you'd like more information, email whss@dol.govt.nz.