

Health board diagnoses own weaknesses

A new Waikato DHB report reveals the areas where it reckons it could do a better job, reports Mike Mather.

Patient transitions and transfers to and from Waikato District Health Board hospitals and patient safety are two of five key areas the organisation needs to do better, according to a report. The health board's annual quality account report, published this week, outlines the areas it believes it should focus on. And those areas have been given the tick of approval by one of the board's watchdog groups. According to the three managers the

board describes as its "quality champions" - former chief operating officer Jan Adams, director of nursing and midwifery Sue Hayward and chief medical adviser Tom Watson - the report demonstrates an ongoing commitment by the organisation to the delivery of safe, high quality healthcare. "Ensuring every service user has a positive experience depends on the skills and commitment of our staff, guided by a strong focus at board level on all aspects that affect the quality of services we provide," the trio say in the document's introduction. They have identified the board's five priority areas for 2014-2015 as: Continuing to keep patients safe during their care; reducing the number of people dying from preventable

conditions; continuing to improve care around deteriorating patients; continuing to improve customer care and responsiveness to patient needs; and improving processes around patient transition and transfer from hospital. The board aimed to remedy the latter issue by improving admission and discharge processes. It would also introduce a revamped compliments, concerns and complaints policy and review handover procedures between shifts, teams and at weekends. Patients' Rights Advocacy Waikato chairwoman Carolyn McKenzie said she agreed with the health board's choices. "They are all areas that have been demonstrated as a weakness. It is laudable that they are being focused on." But while the health board had those

priorities right, there were other areas where the board could do better by more actively lobbying central government. More attention needed to be trained on vaccination programmes she said, particularly tetanus injections that had left many young women in Nigeria sterile; and the Gardasil vaccine that targets the human papillomavirus, which causes warts on the hands, feet and genitals and was responsible for 99 per cent of cervical cancers. The Ministry of Health recently paid \$180 million for Gardasil, which McKenzie said was mysterious, given that it was a disease that had declined by 72 per cent worldwide in recent times. "[The health board] needs to be a more proactive voice on their own account, rather than just blindly doing what the

Ministry of Health tells them to. "I don't have any sort of quarrel with Waikato Hospital. They just struggle along doing the best possible work that they can." Waikato DHB was the first district health board in New Zealand to publish a Quality Account for the year 2010-2011. Back then there were six priority areas: reduce medication errors; reduce patient falls; ensure a clinical audit is carried out in every clinical unit; set up a mortality committee; improve hand hygiene practices; and implement a safe patient care programme. The report can be found at waikatodhb-ebooks.co.nz/qualityreport/index.html. mike.mather@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

IN BRIEF

Hamilton's star rises

Hamilton made the top 10 South Pacific destinations on the rise. The city came in at number 10 on the TripAdvisor list of Travellers' Choice awards for Destinations on the Rise - just below Wanaka. Tumon, in the Mariana Islands, was named the top South Pacific destination on the rise and Da Nang, Vietnam, topped the global list. A blurb on Hamilton, sent out with the list, made mention of "lush pastures", "amazing culinary delights" and proximity to the set of The Shire from Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit movies. Award-winners were determined using an algorithm that primarily measured the year-over-year increase in positive TripAdvisor traveller review ratings across destinations worldwide.

No tickets under new law

Police are yet to issue any infringements for excess breath alcohol under new drink drive limits introduced on Monday. Waikato road policing manager Inspector Freda Grace said she was not aware of any drivers being found by police over the excess breath alcohol limit of 250mcg in the first 24 hours of the new law. On Monday the drink drive limit for drivers aged over 20 was cut from 400 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath to 250mcg. A Waikato Police operation at the weekend stopped 670 vehicles at checkpoints. A total of 36 infringements were issued and nine drivers were found between the 250-400mcg limit that would now be over the limit.

Crash victim dies

A Hamilton woman who crashed her peoplemover into a fence off Forest Lake Rd at the weekend has died in hospital. The 68-year-old is believed to have suffered a medical event prior to crashing her vehicle near the Avalon Dr intersection on Saturday morning, said Hamilton Police Senior Sergeant Rupert Friend. The woman was treated at the scene before being taken to Waikato Hospital where she later died. The woman's death has now been referred to the Coroner and police are no longer investigating.

Brittany wins Babes Battle

Battle of the Babes New Zealand winner Brittany MacDonald won the World title in Hong Kong last week. The 22-year-old competed against five other contestants from Australia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and won a trip to Paris. The first runner-up from Australia, Aleisha Hudson, was also awarded a trip to Paris because there was only a five-point difference between 1st place and runner-up. The duo are likely to travel to Paris in March.

Claudelds lauded

Claudelds Events Centre has claimed two major awards at the Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) Awards. Claudelds won Supreme Venue of the Year and Large Venue of the Year, ahead of Christchurch's Horncastle Arena, Wellington's TSB Arena and Auckland's Western Springs. Since opening in June 2011, Claudelds has hosted Bob Dylan, Billy Connolly and Disney On Ice. In 2015, the venue will host performances by Kenny Rogers, Slash, Eddie Izzard and Ricky Martin. Claudelds is operated by Hamilton City Council's H3 division.

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Economists forecast recovery mid-2015

Gerald Piddock

Whole milk powder prices could remain at low levels for the next six months as economists point to a possible recovery in mid-2015. The commodity is New Zealand's biggest dairy export and had been steadily falling in price on Fonterra's GlobalDairyTrade since February. ASB rural economist Nathan Penny said there was a decent risk that whole milk powder prices could remain low for the next six months. Prices were already low and further falls would be difficult. But there was still an over-supply of milk products on the world market, he said. Another concern was the fall in oil prices. About 18 per cent of New Zealand's dairy products were bought by oil producers and the drop in prices could signal a softening of demand in that market, he said. Penny expected many farmers to dry their cows off earlier this season because it was not economical to feed their herd for milking in a low payout season. Many dairy farmers were already looking ahead to the 2015 season and hoping prices would rebound in 2015-16. "What do we think about milk prices

in 2015? We think it will rebound, but if prices don't recover as fast as we think they will next year, then [new season] prices may start lower than we are currently factoring in." He said their 2015-16 milk price of \$6.50/kg milk solids was under review because of the risk that prices would not recover as quickly as previously thought. BNZ senior economist Doug Steel believed there would not be a genuine recovery in powder prices until the second half of 2015. Last night's GDT auction would give a further indication of the direction of the market, but claims that prices would continuously fall in the next six months were pessimistic, he said. US dairy exports were contracting and while it would take time, it could mark the beginnings of a recovery. ANZ rural economist Con Williams was more optimistic. He did not believe the market would continue to move down over the next six months. It was still early days to assess what impact prices would have if they continued to remain static on next season's forecast. gerald.piddock@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

Woman allegedly drove drunk through crash site

Belinda Feek

A Katikati woman alleged to have driven drunk through a crash scene, oblivious to the flashing lights of police and a tow truck has appeared in court. Teamokura Mere kara Tumohe, 51, was remanded without plea in the Huntly District Court on one charge of driving with an excess breath alcohol level, third or subsequent, of 1131mcg. Tumohe was charged after allegedly driving through a crash scene on Tahuna Rd, near Ohinewai, last month while driving almost three times the former drink drive limit of 400mcg. The drink driving limit of 250mcg came into effect on Monday. The scene had been cordoned off by police with a patrol car at each end both



Teamokura Mere kara Tumohe

which had their flashing hazard lights going. A tow-truck also had its flashing orange lights going as well. Sergeant Neil Mansill, of the Huntly Road Safety Team, earlier told the *Waikato Times* that one of the drivers from the crash had just been taken to hospital by St John Ambulance when Tumohe's vehicle is alleged to have driven through. She was eventually pulled over four kilometres down the road after a police patrol gave chase and clocked her driving at 113kmh. Her car remains impounded. Tumohe was bailed with a condition not to drive and ordered to come back to court next month. belinda.feek@fairfaxmedia.co.nz



Sweet tooth: Hamilton Zoo curator Samantha Kudeweh gives a spoonful of honey to one of the zoo's black-and-white ruffed lemurs. Honey from beehives placed around the city will be fed to the zoo's honey-eaters. Photo: Peter Drury/Fairfax NZ

Beehive project gets city buzzing

Aaron Leaman

Opinions on Hamilton are diverse and plentiful - but few have pondered what the city actually tastes like. The answer to that riddle could soon be revealed in specially produced jars of honey by Horsham Downs company Sweettree Honey. Owners Martin and Stephanie Lynch have struck up a partnership with Hamilton City Council in which 45 beehives will be put at three of the city's most popular attractions - Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton Zoo and Taitua Arboretum. The honey will be sold at the Hamilton Farmers Market, Hamilton Gardens shop and also fed to honey-eating creatures at the zoo. Martin Lynch said honey harvested from the three sites would be blended and retail for about \$13 for a 500-gram jar. The first batch is expected to be available from March.

BEES IN DECLINE

- The arrival of the varroa mite in 2000 decimated New Zealand's wild beehives, effectively halving the total bee pollination workforce.
 - Bee pollination contributes at least \$4.5 billion each year to New Zealand's economy and underpins a further \$12.5b of export revenue from the horticulture, arable, pastoral and beekeeping sectors.
 - Pollination delivers much of the food we eat.
- Source: Federated Farmers

"I'm really looking forward to how it all works out," Lynch said. "The honey from Hamilton Gardens is going to be very interesting and we don't really know what we're going to get because of the variety of plants there." The 45 hives are expected to eventually

produce up to two tonnes of honey. "In the height of summer the hives will add 1.5 million bees to the city. Those who live within three to five kilometres of the hives should notice an increase in bees." Zoo curator Samantha Kudeweh said the sweet treat would be given to the zoo's honey-eating birds such as the tui as well as primates. "We'll give it to our primates in sparing amounts because we don't want them to eat too much of that sort of thing. It's good for enrichment or when we are training animals and we can use it as a reward. Also if we have to medicate animals it's an easy way to get them to take their medicine." Just like humans, primates have a sweet tooth and do not take much encouragement to partake in a spoonful. aaron.leaman@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

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