

CMDHB Release

November 17, 2006

Are we ready for the health sector of the future?

That's the key question being asked at a national Pacific workforce conference, aiming to give attendees the tools to recruit and retain employees who are representative of their communities.

By 2021, the Pacific population is estimated to more than double to 420,000. Fepulea'i Margie Apa, General Manager of Pacific Health at CMDHB says this dramatic population increase will have a number of implications for the health sector. Poor health workforce representation is understood to be a factor contributing to the poor health status of Pacific Peoples.

"Having a responsive health system means growing a health workforce that can provide appropriate services. This conference is about understanding why we need diversity and providing practical management advice and guidance on how we can do it."

"Concerns about race-based programmes in this context are not productive. Particularly when the reality is that we are dealing with diversity in our health services right now. The health needs of our communities are not the same across the board. We need to equip our managers and health service providers with the tools to recruit people who will meet those needs. This conference aims to do that," says Fepulea'i.

The conference, held at Waipuna Hotel on the 21st of November is supported by District Health Board New Zealand (DHBNZ), Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) and Capital & Coast District Health Board.

The conference features two prominent keynote speakers, Dr Joan Reede, Dean for Diversity and Community Partnership at Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA and Professor Des Gorman, Head of the School of Medicine at Auckland University.

Dr Reede is responsible for an innovative programme that provides leadership, guidance and support to promote the increased recruitment, retention and advancement of under-represented minority groups at Harvard Medical School. Dr Reede will speak about ways to build and retain an inclusive workforce.

Professor Gorman, with a doctorate in philosophy, a Bachelor degree in Science as well as Medicine and Surgery, is well equipped to hold the Head of School position at Auckland's School of Medicine. Professor Gorman will speak about why diversity will be an important factor in the health professional of the future.

Other speakers:

Pat Snedden, Chairman of Counties Manukau District Health Board
Dr Elana Taipapaki Curtis, Public Health Medicine Specialist
Dr Margaret Southwick, Dean and Faculty director, Pacific Health Research Centre
Ella Henry, Maori TV presenter and Permapave business owner
Margie Fepulea'i, GM Pacific Health, Counties Manukau District Health Board
Trish Hall, Director of Tall Poppies
Oscar Kightley, Pacific Entertainment Entrepreneur

Media Attendance:

Media are welcome to attend part or all of the conference for free. Please contact Anne Fitisemanu on 021 587 329 to arrange admittance.

For more information please contact Lauren Young and Associates on 09) 378 8433.