



The Newsletter of the  
Canterbury District Health Board

# Canterbury Healthline

ISSUE 60, DECEMBER 2001

## Emergency staff set for hectic holiday

While most people look forward to winding down and enjoying a well-deserved break at Christmas, staff at Christchurch Hospital's Emergency Department are bracing themselves for what is traditionally the busiest day of their year.

Christchurch Hospital has the busiest Emergency Department in Australasia, seeing more than 65,000 patients a year.

In a year of busy days Christmas Day is by far the busiest. Staff can expect to treat between 160 and 200 people on Christmas Day alone. The increase in demand for the Emergency Department starts on Christmas Eve, mainly with alcohol-related problems. Demand picks up again early in the afternoon of Christmas Day, and it remains busy until after New Year.

People can help to ease the pressure on emergency staff during this time by thinking ahead, being prepared, and being careful.

It is important that the Emergency Department is used for emergencies only — this applies at all times, but is especially important during the busy holiday season.

General practitioners arrange cover for their patients during the holiday period. Telephone your doctor's rooms for details of your doctor's after hours arrangements.

Don't let the silly season let you down:

- Roads will be busy: drive carefully and allow time to rest during long journeys.
- Going away? Don't forget your medications, and ensure you have adequate supplies to see you through your holiday.
- Alcohol increases the likelihood of all types of accidents, so do not over-indulge.
- Do not drink and drive.
- Do not over-eat: this puts extra strain on your body.
- Walk off your Christmas dinner — this will help your body to cope.
- Adults: think twice before you try out the children's toys, especially skateboards, in-line skates, trampolines, and bicycles.
- Ensure children are well supervised when using such equipment and near roads or water.
- Be sun-smart: cover up, use a sun block, wear a hat and sunglasses — and stay out of the mid-day sun.
- Drink plenty of water in hot weather.
- Do not mix alcohol with swimming or boating.



*Emergency Nurse Pip Matheson and Doctor Gareth Richards in Christchurch Hospital's Emergency Department, where Christmas Day can be the busiest day of the year.*



# Smokefree in with sporting chance for award



Crown Public Health, Canterbury Rugby League, and the Health Sponsorship Council have forged a strong alliance to snuff out smoking.

Crown Public Health and the Health Sponsorship Council provide Smokefree sponsorship to the Canterbury Bulls Rugby League team, and health promoter Kerri Nalder says players and management have become enthusiastic supporters of the Smokefree cause.

The project has been so successful that it is a finalist in two categories in the New Zealand Post Sports Sponsorship Awards — sports sponsorship under \$30,000 and best provincial sponsorship.

Canterbury Bulls embrace Smokefree message: from left are Bulls forward Robert Henare, Health Promoter Kerri Nalder, Bulls centre Raymond Hubbard, and Health Protection Officer Angela Sheat.

“We’re absolutely rapt,” says Kerri Nalder. “It’s a tiny sponsorship really — less than \$10,000, but it’s having a big impact.”

Sponsoring rugby league is an ideal way to get the Smokefree message to key target audiences, she says. Rugby League is popular among

- Maori (40% of adult players).
- 18-34 year olds (78% of players).
- 11% of rugby league players are unemployed, 23% are trade workers.
- Of the women who play rugby league, a high proportion are Maori.

- These groups are also highly represented among league supporters.

Kerri Nalder says Canterbury Rugby League has been the driving force behind the sponsorship, and is doing much more to support the Smokefree ethos than Crown Public Health ever expected.

“They’ve set up designated smokefree areas at all their facilities, indoors and out, the players have a no smoking on duty policy, they’re doing Smokefree promotion in schools — they’re the only rugby league team offering such a comprehensive approach and they’re setting a great example,” she says.

Chief Executive Marcus Durkin says Canterbury Rugby League is genuinely passionate about being Smokefree.

“We need to change stereotypical views about rugby league, from both the spectators’ and the players’ perspective,” he says. “We are promoting that healthy lifestyles matter, and being smokefree is about achieving optimum performance in sport.”

## Saying it with flowers

Shirley Joughin, who is recovering from a stroke, is so grateful for the support she has received that she has arranged for them flowers. Pictured from left are Ward 2A nurses Gaye Shakespeare, Doreen Joughin, and Shirley Joughin.



# Reducing the impact of diabetes

Canterbury HealthLine



New Zealand is on the brink of a diabetes epidemic. Age-related Type 2 (non-insulin dependent) diabetes is largely preventable, but rates of the disorder are soaring, particularly among Maori and Pacific Island communities.

In Canterbury the Local Diabetes Team is working to identify ways to address this debilitating and disabling disease to limit its impact on individuals, families, and society.

If not diagnosed early and properly treated and managed diabetes can cause serious kidney disease, blindness, and circulation problems that can lead to heart disease, or gangrene which may infect limbs and require amputation.

A Local Diabetes Team network was set up throughout New Zealand in 1999. In Canterbury the team involves people with diabetes, representatives of the Maori and Pacific Island communities, Diabetes Life Education, the Diabetes Society, the Diabetes Centre, Crown Public Health, general practitioners, and other groups and indi-

Linda Rattray has her eyes tested at Christchurch Hospital's diabetic retinopathy clinic by Medical Photographer Sue Hirst.



viduals with an interest in diabetes.

Canterbury team chairwoman Hillary Currie says the group has focused on defining the scale of the diabetes problem in the region it is responsible for (Canterbury and the West Coast) and identifying gaps in service.

An extensive survey of diabetes services has begun, and the results will be used to help plan future services in the region.

"Already we know that there are some areas of diabetes care that need to be addressed quite urgently," she says.

The team is pushing the Government to fund additional retinal photographic screening so that the serious retinal abnormalities caused by diabetes can be diagnosed early to prevent blindness. Ideally, she says, retinal screening should be carried out every two years.

"There are 13,000 diagnosed cases of diabetes in the Canterbury/West Coast region, so to meet the two-year check-up criteria we would need to test at least 6000 of those people each year," says Dr Currie. "At the moment funding allows us to do 1800 retinal screenings a year, so we're only able to check people every three years, and that is an area we would like to see improve."

Maori, Pacific Island, and Asian peoples are particularly vulnerable to diabetes, and Dr Currie says there is an urgent need for a strategy to reduce the burgeoning impact of diabetes on these populations.

"Diabetes Life Education has trained seven Maori and five Pacific Island leaders to be lifestyle advisers who will focus on awareness, education, prevention, and early diagnosis," she says.

This important initiative aims to prevent diabetes by supporting and encouraging people to increase their levels of physical activity, make healthy food choices, and have regular screening.

"We're working really hard to turn the current disturbing statistics around," she says.

The local team has secured funding to increase Pacific Island diabetes nurse education through the Diabetes Centre, and for Nurse Maude to employ mobile diabetes nurses. The team is also considering supporting research into diabetes management within residential care.

"Diabetes is a huge issue for this country," says Dr Currie. "The consequences of diabetes are delayed, so it is important that we put systems in place now to cope with increasing rates of the disease in the future."

t of nursing staff at The Princess Margaret Hospital that she bought  
en Wallace, Sharyn Worrill, Cheryl Giddens, Helen Smart, with patient





# Doctor on track to improve world ranking

It's a struggle to fit elite sports training in around being a second-year House Surgeon, but Mark Bailey is determined to maintain his position as New Zealand's top duathlete.

Duathlons are running and cycling events following a run-bike-run format. Dr Bailey has held the New Zealand champion title for the last two years — and he is not about to give it up.

While at the top of his field in New Zealand he is also determined to improve his world ranking, and aims to finish in the top five — if not on the podium — at the World Championships in Atlanta next year.

On the world circuit he is one of only a couple of amateurs competing with fulltime professional athletes. While they can treat their training as a fulltime job, Dr Bailey spends 50-75 hours a week working on the wards — lately on rotation at the Princess Margaret Hospital.

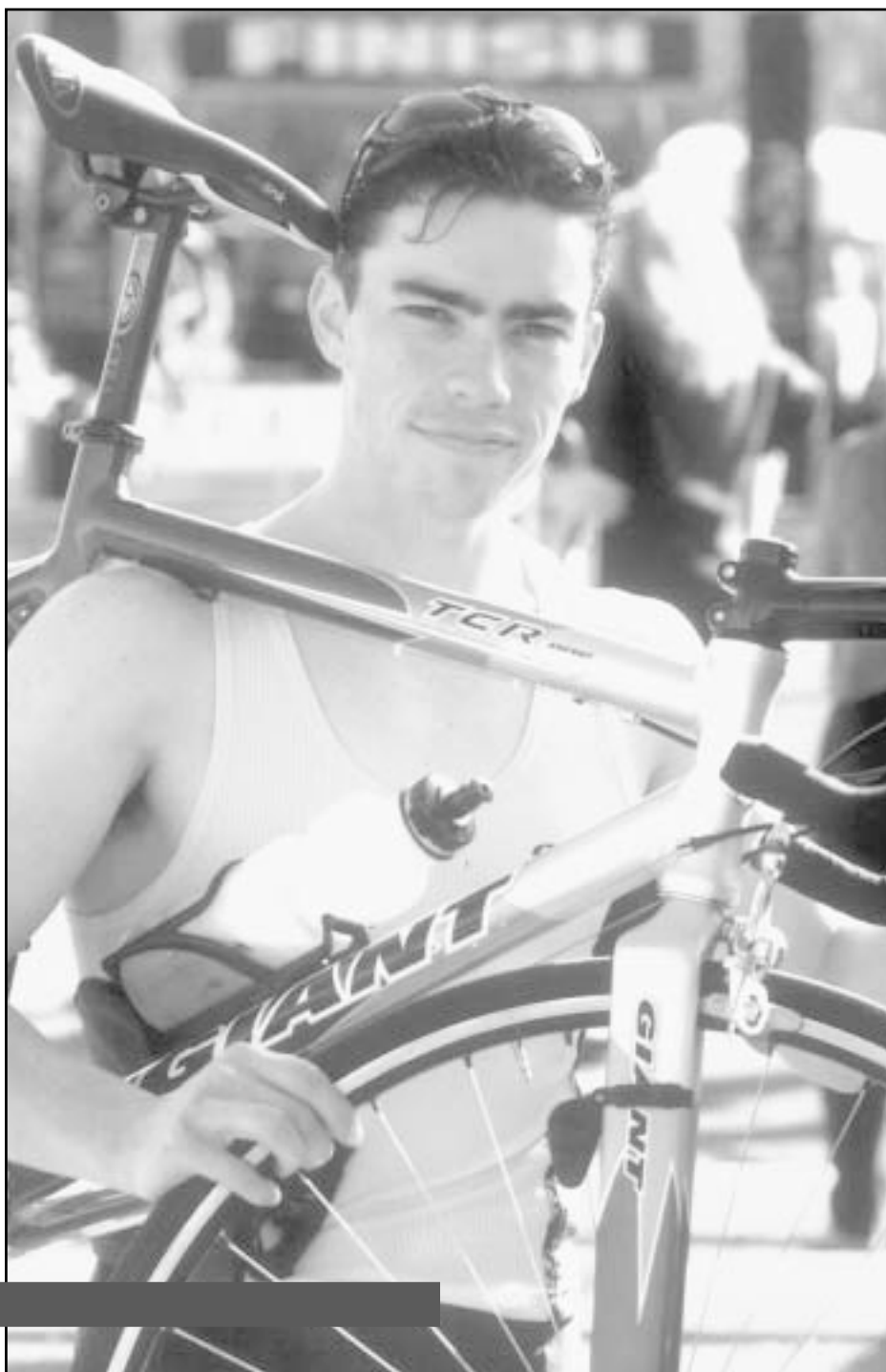
"I usually manage to complete about 12 hours duathlon training in a normal week — that's about all you can do as a House Surgeon," he says. "It's a great stress-reliever though, and by the time I come in from training the stress of a day of work seems a world away."

Dr Bailey's world championship ranking last year was 28th, in a field of 90. This year he had hoped to improve on that, but slipped back to 39th.

"I was really disappointed with that," he says. "I've had a great year in New Zealand, setting four course records. It was all looking really good, but the week before the World Champs in Italy I came down with sinusitis and came in below par."

That result has made him even more determined to do well next year, when he aims to secure his third New Zealand title and improve his world ranking. To that end he will work halftime so that he can dedicate more time to training.

As an amateur, he relies heavily on sponsors — Giant provide his bike, New Balance his shoes and other clothing, Smith his sunglasses and other accessories, and Aunt Betty's provide the creamy rice that is his staple diet. Dr Bailey says having an employer who gives him special leave to compete has also been a huge help.



Dr Mark Bailey: champion duathlete.

# Hospital Volunteers' Contribution Acknowledged

Canterbury HealthLine



Hospital volunteers are vital in the network of services provided at Canterbury District Health Board hospitals throughout the region.

Their contribution has been recognised at a series of functions held in their honour to mark International Year of the Volunteer.

Each of the Board's hospitals has people providing voluntary services, whether it is hands-on work or fundraising activities. Their efforts provide the extras that Government funding does not stretch to cover, the non-essential comforts that enrich the lives of patients while they are in hospital or attending outpatient clinics.

Where possible Chief Executive Jean O'Callaghan has attended functions held for volunteers at hospitals throughout the region.

The Christchurch Hospital function coincided with the Hospital Volunteers' AGM, at which Jean O'Callaghan and Board Chairman Syd Bradley planted a commemorative camellia, "Volunteer", outside the main entrance.

*Canterbury District Health Board Chairman Syd Bradley and Chief Executive Jean O'Callaghan plant a Camellia and unveil a plaque outside Christchurch Hospital to commemorate International Year of the Volunteer.*

They each offered their personal thanks to the volunteers for their efforts, saying that the work they did as volunteers enriched the hospital experience of patients.

Coordinator of Volunteers at Christchurch Hospital, Gaye Hall, says there are 117 people regularly doing voluntary work in Christchurch Hospital alone.

"Some of them have been volunteers here for more than 20 years," she says.

The first coordinator of volunteers was Alice Cameron, who started the volunteer service at The Princess Margaret Hospital in 1975.

Mrs Cameron is now one of Gaye Hall's volunteers at Christchurch Hospital, and along with another of the original volunteers, Olive Barrett, cut the cake at the lunchtime function.

Gaye Hall says the volunteers provide "the extras" for patients in hospital.

"Our work focuses on the patient comforts," she says. "We have people working in wards, fundraising, working in the gift shop, taking library books around the wards for patients — we do all kinds of things really, and they are an amazingly generous group of people."





# Grant awarded to hospital pharmacist

Christchurch Hospital pharmacist Rachel Wilson is the recipient of an Amgen Australia Clinical Pharmacy Practice Grant.

Rachel Wilson is Christchurch Hospital's haematology pharmacist.

The Amgen Award will allow her to spend a week observing these areas of practice in an Australian hospital.

She is particularly keen to visit an Australian site offering bone marrow transplants at a unit similar to that at Christchurch Hospital, and aims to spend time at a hospital in either Sydney or Melbourne.

"Bone marrow transplantation is a protocol-driven area, and I'm looking forward to seeing how they do things over there. We might learn something new, or I may find that we are doing really well here," she says.

Rachel Wilson spent five years work-

Haematology pharmacist Rachel Wilson: recipient of an Amgen Australia Clinical Pharmacy Practice Grant.



ing in the United Kingdom before returning to Christchurch over a year ago. Her background is in oncology and haematology, and she has developed a special interest in bone marrow transplants.

"From a pharmacy point of view, the science of bone marrow transplantation is fascinating, and from a drug treatment point of view it is really full on," she says. "I enjoy working in that unit. It's a very supportive unit where pharmacy input is encouraged."

She hopes to use her grant early next year.

## • UPDATE •

### INTRANET SURVEY

The Intranet Steering Group thanks all staff who participated in the recent Intranet survey.

There was a good response to the survey, with 452 responses received in all.

The winner of the Intranet survey mystery prize draw is Dr William Gordon from the Hillmorton campus. He won a \$200 Arthur Barnett voucher, donated by a supplier.

The Steering Group is currently analysing the survey results. Steering Group chairman Dr Edward Coughlan says a summary of the findings will be made available to staff shortly.

### TAXI FIRM CARRIES SAFE SEX MESSAGE

It may be the silly season, but that's no reason to stop practising sensible sex.

This year Crown Public Health in Christchurch is working with United Taxis, who will have free condoms available in their cabs, in a repeat of a highly successful campaign run by Crown Public Health in

Timaru last year.

Sexual Health Promoters Chris Woods and Cathy Hamer will run the Erection Protection project from December to February.

"We are keen to increase our distribution of condoms as a front line approach to promoting safer sex," says Chris Woods.

Since February the team has given out 12,400 condoms, supplying them free at community events and education sessions.

### DRAFT PLAN SET FOR CONSULTATION

The Canterbury District Health Board's draft Strategic Plan 2002-2007 and Beyond will be released for public consultation in January. Watch your local newspaper for opportunities to be involved in this process, which will run from January 14 until March 21.

After consultation, this important document will set the future direction for policies and objectives over the next five to 10 years, and set out how the Board should use its resources to meet the health and disability needs of the

people of Canterbury.

The final Strategic Plan has to be ready for the Minister of Health to approve in June.

Critical to the strategic planning process has been the health needs assessment of the Canterbury population. This has required pulling together key population data from the 1996 Census (and 2001 Census when this becomes available) and data held by a range of agencies including the Ministry of Health and local authorities.

The full health needs assessment document and a summary of it are available online on the Canterbury District Health Board website ([www.cdhb.govt.nz](http://www.cdhb.govt.nz)). Staff can also access the document on the CDHB Intranet.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS...

This year's Christmas Party for staff at the Christchurch Hospital campus will be held on Tuesday December 11, from 3pm to 7.30pm at the Great Escape Café.

All Christchurch Hospital campus staff are invited to enjoy the festivities.