



THE WAIKATO DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD'S – TOBACCO CONTROL POSITION STATEMENT

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Introduction

The following is a position statement on tobacco control prepared by Population Health for Waikato District Health Board (Waikato DHB).

The Waikato District Health Board's position

The Waikato DHB supports the Government's vision of a Smoke-free Aotearoa 2025, where less than 5% of adult population will use tobacco and it will be extremely difficult to manufacture, market, sell and supply tobacco.

The Waikato DHB supports action at a national level to achieve this vision, including regular increases in tobacco taxation, reduced marketing of tobacco, reduced access to tobacco, plain packaging and ongoing legislative controls on the manufacture and sale of tobacco.

The Waikato DHB supports the Midlands Smoke-free 2025 vision statement and action plan.

The Waikato DHB supports activities to improve smoking cessation within the adult population, in particular to reduce disparities for Maori and Pacific, and reduce the uptake of smoking by young people.

The Waikato DHB supports measures that protect non smokers from second hand smoke – especially vulnerable population groups (e.g. children and pregnant women including protecting children from tobacco smoke in vehicles)

The Waikato DHB supports and actively encourages current smokers including DHB employees, contractors, patients and carers on all DHB sites to quit smoking and stay quit.

The Waikato DHB will actively work towards achieving the "Better Help for Smokers to Quit" target in secondary and primary care settings.

The Waikato DHB will actively work towards ensuring all DHB property, facilities, buildings and vehicles are Smoke-free environments through policy development, active encouragement, education, advice and enforcement.

The Waikato DHB does not recognise e-cigarettes as a nicotine replacement therapy product but as a tobacco product. Thus any DHB policies that refer to the management and or restriction of tobacco products also refer to e-cigarettes.

The Waikato DHB supports various sectors to plan for, promote and support Smokefree environments and interventions through partnerships based on shared strategic vision and coordinated investment.

The Waikato DHB supports the role of Smoke-free Officers employed by the DHB and designated by the Director-General of Health to ensure that the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 is administered through education, advice, enforcement and initiation of prosecutions as necessary.

The Waikato DHB supports the continuation of the making of submissions on tobacco issues to district and regional councils and government select committees when appropriate; the provision of input into district and regional council tobacco policies and plans, including Smokefree open spaces; and the provision of ongoing promotion of tobacco harm reduction strategies to health care professionals and the public.

The Waikato DHB recognises that

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that tobacco use is responsible for approximately one in 10 deaths worldwide or five million deaths per year. It is the leading cause of preventable death in New Zealand killing approximately 4500 people each year, 13 people a day, plus an estimated 400 people a year from second hand smoke.

One in four of all New Zealand cancer deaths are caused by smoking and it is a major contributor to cardiovascular disease, chronic pulmonary disease, acute respiratory infections and asthma particularly in children, strokes and the impact of diabetes. These chronic conditions place a major burden on the wellness of the population of Waikato and they contribute a significant cost to the health service.

While overall smoking rates are declining, there are significant health inequalities associated with tobacco use nationally and in the Waikato. Almost half of all Maori smoke and just over a third of Pacific compared to a quarter of the overall New Zealand population. This disparity in smoking rates is a significant contributor to observed disparities in related disease burden. Approximately a fifth of all deaths in Maori are attributable to tobacco use.

Smoking during pregnancy is a source of considerable and serious negative health outcomes for babies and women in New Zealand. Smoking during pregnancy reduces the growth and health of babies and increases the risk of complications and illnesses to both mother and baby.

Comprehensive tobacco control programmes are effective and should include a mix of health promotion, tobacco taxation, smoking cessation, research, legislation and enforcement.

References

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www.who.int

www.moh.health.govt/

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