

Report to the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki - Synod 2022

Waikato Hospital Chaplaincy

We are very thankful for the ongoing Anglican support of chaplaincy in Waikato and Taumarunui Hospitals and, through volunteer chaplaincy assistants, at Thames and Rhoda Read (Morrinsville). We are also grateful for the support by excellent Anglican church representation on our local chaplaincy committee and by twenty six trained volunteers from a wide range of denominations.

The diverse ministry of hospital chaplaincy to people of all faiths and those of no faith continues with an ongoing increase in support of staff for a wide range of pastoral matters, set against the background of hospitals facing major administrative changes, severe pressure on staff and increasing healthcare demand. Over the past twelve months there have also been the immense added stresses from continuing to deal with Covid-19. We are often humbled by the degree to which patients, whānau and staff from such a wide variety of backgrounds, will turn to and trust Chaplaincy for spiritual care and support, in the midst of great challenges and vulnerability.

Over the past year we have had one new Chaplain appointed part-time (0.2 FTE) at Taumarunui Hospital due to the resignation of our previous Chaplain there and fare-welled Rev Rosie Dell who resigned in June to take up a new full-time parish position. Two of the Chaplains have also completed the very demanding CPE training. We have not undertaken any new VCA (Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistant) training, including the new training that had been planned for Thames, due to the inability of our VCA's to visit within the Hospital because of Covid. In addition we have had a number of resignations from our existing pool of VCA's, some of whom have faithfully served for many long years. Over the year the Chaplains have endeavoured to continue to support our VCA's by holding regular catchups and Education Sessions over zoom.

We have held two Chaplaincy Team days where the Chaplains and Locums have been able to meet together to forward plan and work on strategies. In response to the limitations and changing regulations due to Covid, the Team have focused on building better relationships with many departments within the hospital and have enjoyed considerable positive results from their efforts. We have been asked to do presentations twice for the social workers and also for the pain team, have a new initiative to support parents of children in Hospital, have developed better relationships with ward staff and in particular with ICU and mental health staff and have facilitated meetings for the Christian Medical Fellowship. In all of our efforts to develop and progress Chaplaincy services within the Hospital, the Team have been most grateful for the on-going support and commitment of their DHB Manager, Donna Craig-Brown. As numbers of positive cases rose during the year in Waikato the Team decided to create a bubble with only the two full-time Chaplains coming into the office and the other part-time Chaplains working from home. This bubble was created because of the limited space in our offices and a desire to avoid the possibility of all Chaplains being unable to attend patients because they were either close contacts or Covid positive themselves. The plan worked very well and by May we were able to return to normal office and Hospital attendance.

One of the great losses over the last year has been our Sunday service. We rely heavily on volunteers to run the services by fetching patients and numerous other tasks. Because of covid these volunteers have not been able to access the hospital. Patients are always asking about the service and we look forward to the time we can recommence them, although at the moment we do not know when that will be.

The Team continue to be well supported by our Local Chaplaincy Committee, Friends of Hospital Chaplaincy (FOHC), who enable us to link more effectively with local churches and the wider community. We are grateful for all who partake in this challenging and rewarding ministry using their many gifts and talents. We are always open to exploring God's calling with those who feel this might be a calling for them. FOHC have been able to support the Chaplains this year by providing uniforms for all the Chaplains and Locums, which have been a very welcome addition. All the Chaplains have commented that the uniform has enabled them to raise the awareness of Chaplaincy around the Hospital and present a professional appearance. We have found access around the Hospital easier and are welcomed now at a glance. Friends also very kindly bought a paid subscription to Zoom so that the Chaplaincy Team are able to hold remote meetings without time limits, which has been much appreciated in these difficult times.

On the national level, ICHC CEO Simon Greening resigned from his position and David Hough, who was serving as Manager, has taken on the role of acting CEO until the new CEO Barry Fisk starts in October. The Team are grateful that the structures of ICHC have been stable and supportive and we are also most appreciative for the assistance from our Regional Manager Matiu Best, over the year.

Going forward the Chaplains hope to further enhance the relationships they have been trying to build and are excited to continue to find innovative ways to minister within Waikato Hospital. In all our endeavors we are most appreciative and grateful for the support of the Diocese. We are always very pleased to receive referrals for any parishioners coming into hospital.

Ngā mihi nui

The Chaplains of Waikato