

# Counties Manukau School Based Health Services Project:

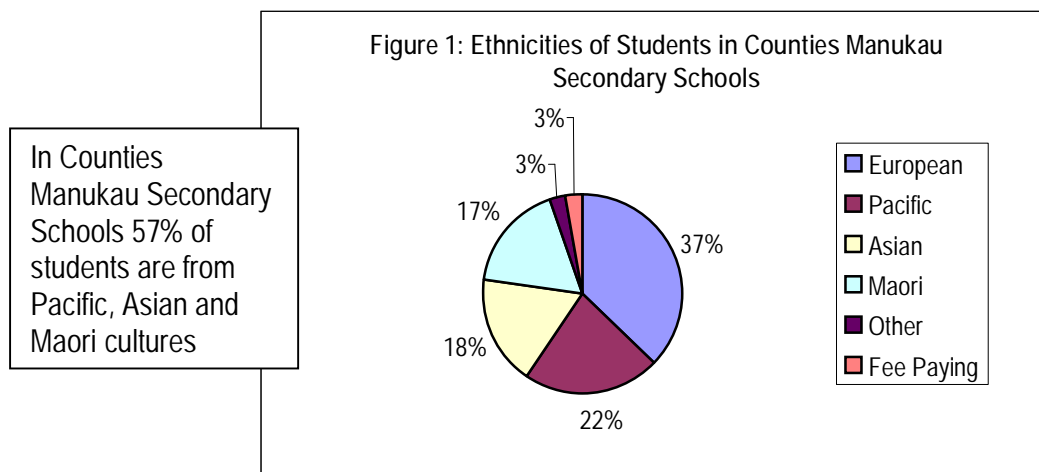
## Sexual Health Services Review in Counties Manukau Secondary Schools:

### Introduction:

The following data has been collated as part of the recent survey review of school-based health services relating to sexual health in Counties Manukau secondary schools. The purpose of this information is to demonstrate what services exist in secondary schools and what the barriers are for young people to access the service; so that this essential service for young people can be added to and improved.

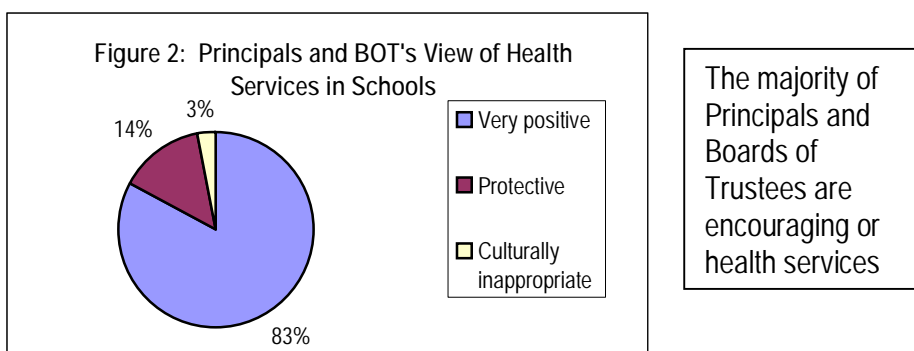
### Background:

There are approximately 31,574 young people in Counties Manukau attending mainstream secondary schools. 57% of these young people are of Maori, Pacific or Asian ethnicities (Figure 1). Access to health services for young people in the community can be difficult due to a variety of reasons for example poor understanding of health and the health system, financial restrictions, the need for parental consent and language and cultural barriers. This is particularly true of sexual health services.



### Principal and BOT view on generic health services in schools:

A recent review of secondary schools in Counties Manukau found that 83% of Principals and Boards of Trustees (BOT) are in full support of health services in schools and comment that poor health has a large impact on the students' ability to learn. 14% of these schools have Principals who support having health services in schools but their BOT and / or communities are protective of schools taking on health service responsibilities. The opinion in these schools is that "schools are places of learning not hospitals". The remaining 3% of Principals and their BOT felt that the health curriculum - particularly sexual and mental health areas, are not culturally appropriate for their school (Figure 2).



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What Sexual Health Services are available in schools and who provides them:

Sexual Health services within Counties Manukau schools are known to vary considerably from school to school and from a very basic service to one that is comprehensive. From the recent scoping exercise of Counties Manukau Secondary Schools, the services that are provided for young people to access Sexual Health services and information both on and off school sites vary.

Of the 28 schools in the scoping exercise –

- 7% have a Sexual Health clinic on site with a further 14% accessing this service off site;
- 18% have a Family Planning clinic on site with a further 39% accessing this service off site; and
- 28% run a Peer Sexuality and Support Programme (PSSP) in school.

Of these schools -

- None have all three services while 25% have both Family Planning and PSSP on site.

Each school has different perceptions as to what should / could be provided in this area and of what is needed to improve the service and therefore access to health care (sexual health care particularly) for Counties Manukau young people.

Appendix 1 provides a table of 'Services in Schools' to demonstrate the variation between the schools – with the schools represented by number and not in any particular order.

**Areas of Concern where Health could provide further support to Education:**

Local Services and Agencies:

In the view of some schools there is a perceived increase in the number of young people whose health needs are being neglected.

Access to services for young people is more difficult in some areas due to geographical (rural) location as well as having the general difficulties that many other schools face such as access to the social services. A social worker at school would be helpful in accessing / coordination of services and connecting with families e.g. a young girl who leaves home for 6 weeks at a time to "work on the streets", despite repeated referrals no action has been taken and her mother is very concerned. Knowing what services are available for young people and the development of closer working relationships with these services or agencies to enable speedier responses to enquiries is likely also to be helpful. Schools are able to provide opportunities for students and their families, who are experiencing difficulties, to access health care. Access to specialist services within an acceptable time frame and which is also culturally sensitive can be difficult for some young people.

An improvement in the public health nursing service in assessing and treating home-based health issues and a liaison between public health nurses and school-based nurses - about students with pertinent health issues and those coming into year nine with previously identified health concerns, either personally or in their family - would be beneficial to having the young person's needs met. The lack of professionalism and respect for the students and the school by some visiting practitioner's needs addressing particularly in this very sensitive area.

Sexual Health:

The sexual health needs of young people are enormous and the provision of services and staff to attend to these needs are minimal. Family Planning Association of New Zealand (FPANZ) provides on site school clinics to some schools, although some of the school staff feel the allocated time in the school is insufficient to provide the necessary service in some areas and schools. The sexual health clinics that are available for young people are often poorly situated, which makes access difficult. The coverage of this topic in schools is very dependent on the support of the Principal and Board of Trustees plus the 'comfort level' of the staff involved in the classroom setting. In some schools, sexual health for years nine and ten is currently accessed off site and staff members in the schools feel it would be more effective if covered on site. Some students with high needs are being missed, particularly by the offsite visits, due to truancy. There is concern that the 'U22

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Doctors' (a sexual health service for Under 22's provided by GP's) funding has been reduced (and is possibly being withdrawn) thereby further reducing access to sexual health services for young people.

It was suggested that FPANZ centres often have unsuitable clinic times for students at school e.g. within school hours and the service can sometimes be indiscreet and unhelpful – in terms of both personnel and location.

**What are the gaps in this area and what needs to happen for this to work better:**

Each school has gaps in different areas although several have common concerns in the area of Sexual Health.

Many gaps and problems were identified in this area ranging from the way this subject is taught in schools to the provision of services for young people, which need to be easily and readily available, while at the same time being discrete and sensitive to the communities served by the school.

- School Nurse: 32% of the schools have an Enrolled Nurse or First Aider(s) rather than a Registered Nurse on site and many of the schools do not like the 'nurse' to be off-site during school hours. Some Nurses feel this restricts the ability of young people to access some services due to the Nurse not being able to provide transport and extra support necessary in some circumstances.
- Off-site services – transportation and safety issues: Other schools suggest that for students to access services which are off site is very time consuming for both the student and the 'adult' who may be needed to provide transport. Another school states that it is too unsafe for students to walk out of the school grounds. For example, a visit to a Family Planning Service leaves students vulnerable to violence on the streets but having a similar service come to the school as a safer option also incurs community disapproval, despite the very large need in this particular school. The difficulties in accessing the Sexual Health Service based in Auckland by bus from some areas has proved to be a barrier for young people to access the service e.g. a Year 12 student travelled for over 4 hours on the bus (plus her appointment time) in school time to get to and from one appointment. It seems the 'taxi chit' system currently in place to assist young people in accessing the service is either not used or not known.
- On-site or mobile services: Many suggestions were offered around having these services provided on the school site or in the case of rural schools having a mobile service. Due to the distance barrier to access sexual health care it was suggested that the Public Health Nurses and FPANZ services were being used only for urgent sexual health issues i.e. there is little preventive or ongoing care available or being accessed. .
- Sexually Transmitted Infections and confidentiality: Of great concern to staff members of a rural school is the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STI). The young people apparently feel there is a possible lack of confidentiality with the local medical practice (being in a small town) and transport (requiring transport from a rural area to the service) are barriers to having confidential access to the only available service.
- Teenage pregnancies: There is perceived to be a high number of unintended pregnancies in the area. The Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) is accessed but the clinic (a small FPANZ clinic on the school site) is only available one day per week. It is suggested that a school nurse and a full Family Planning Association (FPANZ) clinic on the school site would considerably help these young people to access help and information.
- Co-ed sexual health classes: Another area of concern is co-ed classes for sexual health 'lessons'. This is thought to be a disadvantage to students, in that they would perhaps be less inclined to ask questions to further their understanding, and that separate classes for males and females for any sensitive subjects should be established.

**Does health overall interface with the curriculum:**

The degree to which health as a whole interfaces with the curriculum depends on the level at which health topics are covered by the individual schools (including support from the Principal and BOT) as well as the comfort level of the teaching staff particularly for topics such as sexual health. Some schools cover very limited

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health topics and have little or no interface with other areas of the curriculum, while others are considerably more detailed and interface with several other topics such as Science, Social Studies, English, Food and Nutrition, Physical Education / Sports Science, Careers.

### Conclusion:

There are many differing practices throughout the area of health in the education setting, brought about by many varying influences such as staff opinions, knowledge and abilities, funding, facilities available and access to services. Young people have an increasing number of needs, which are not being met, due to poor access to health services for a variety of other reasons. This is particularly true of sexual health.

To improve young people's access to services and therefore their health (and possibly that of their families) a coordinated school-based health service that includes special attention to sexual health needs is required across the schools, which would provide professional health support for the school and the nurse within that school (including supervision), which in turn would provide consistency in levels and standards of practice and of information taught or provided. All these services then provide a reliable place for young people to access accurate information in this, often complex, area.

Counties Manukau District Health Board has invited representation from the Auckland School Nurses Group, to discuss, plan, involve others where appropriate and implement a way forward to improve access and services available to young people in Counties Manukau Secondary Schools and to review the professional standing of Nurses in Counties Manukau Schools. Sexual Health is recognised as a particularly problematic area due to its socially and culturally sensitive nature.

CMDHB welcomes your comments or input into these discussions

## Counties Manukau School Based Health Services Project:

### APPENDIX 1:

What Sexual Health Services are available in schools and who provides them.

Key:

√	Funded by School	GSE	Group Special Education	PHN	Public Health Nurse
ACC	Accident Compensation Commission	MYC	Manukau Youth Centre	PHO	Primary Health Organisation
CfYH	Centre for Youth Health	PACT	Papatoetoe Adolescent Christian Trust	Priv	Privately funded
CYF	Child Youth and Family				

### Services provided Off School Site –

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
AIDS Foundation										√ 16y+			√				√												
Awhitia				√																									
Family Planning Assoc.			√		√	√	√			√	√			√	√	√	√		√										
Epsom Day Unit								√																					
Medical – GP U22 Dr	PHO		Free		PHO	√		√			PHO	PHO	PHO	PHO		PHO			PHO					PHO	PHO	PHO		PHO	PHO
Rape Counselling								√																					
Rape Crisis –Auck								√																					
Sexual Health Clinic	√						PHO	√					√																

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### Services Provided On School Site:

Schools :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Family Planning Assoc Clinic	Free				√	√	√				√																	
Speaker Packs	√									√			√	√													√	
Life Skills –			√		√	√			√	√		√							√		√	√			√	√	√	√
Medical –GP								PHO	X2						PHO	PHO		√										
Nursing Service – ACC Registered EN				√					√																	√		
RN	√		√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√		
First Aider / Other Public Health Nurse		√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√	√
District Nurse			√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√	√
Personal Health PSSP	√		√	√	√			√	√	√	√		√		√	MYC						√				√		√
Rape Crisis	√				√									√														
Sexual Health – Puberty	√		√	FLEP	√	√		√			√		√	FLEP		√	√	Basic		√	√	FLEP	√	√		√		√
Relationships	√		√	√	√	√		√	√		√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	FLEP
Decision Making			√	√	√	√		√			√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Reprod. A & P	√		√	√	√	√		√			√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
STI's	√		√	√	√	√		√			√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Safe Sex	√		√	√	√	√		√			√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Contraception	√			√	√	√		√			√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Sexual Health Clinic									√																√			
Student Services – Social Worker			√	√										√		√	√					√						
Guidance Counsellor	√				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x 2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teen Preg/ Parenting					√						√															√		
Youth Support Workers											√																	