

More accessible and affordable health care after hours in Auckland

The three District Health Boards across Auckland announced a landmark change today for those needing urgent health care after hours.

From Monday 5 September, Aucklanders will be able to access a network of Accident and Medical (A&M) clinics that will be open in evenings, weekends and public holidays until at least 10pm.

Four clinics will be operating overnight covering North, West, South and East Auckland. Many will also have better access to health advice over the phone after hours. For those who need it most, their care will now be more affordable.

The initiative was developed through a taskforce representing the three Auckland DHBs, the region's Primary Health Care Organisations, and Auckland's A&M clinics, which came together to address inconsistencies in opening hours and costs, as well as reduce the pressures on public hospital emergency departments.

Counties Manukau DHB CEO Geraint Martin, on behalf of the three DHBs, says "These clinics will offer reduced charges for patients who have traditionally used hospital emergency departments as their after hours solution because of cost. This, along with the telephone advice, will help stem the growth of patients visiting the hospital emergency departments who could be cared for equally as well or better in the community. This is particularly the case for patients on low incomes."

Nearly half of Auckland's population will get access to these reduced charges. This group includes:

- under six year olds,
- those 65 and over,
- community services card holders
- high user health card holders,
- those who live in a low income area.

For example, in Henderson, under 6 year olds are usually being charged \$31 and up to \$36 on a public holiday and this will now be free after hours. Seven of the 11 clinics will see under six year olds for free.

“All hospitals in the region have been hit hard with high numbers of ED patients this winter, and only last week Middlemore Hospital saw a record breaking 356 patients in its ED in a single day. More telephone advice and affordable after hours care at A&M clinics will address the growth of people going to hospital emergency departments. It will also ensure that people are aware, that even in the middle of the night, they can get expert advice and go to an A&M.” said Mr Martin.

The three DHBs have committed \$7.5 million to the project, while the region’s PHOs and A&Ms have invested \$1.7 million to the project.

“This project is a positive new way of working across the region, with DHBs, PHOs and the primary care sector all coming together to make this initiative a reality.” said Mr Martin.

Chair of the Taskforce, Dr Ian Scott says, “During normal working hours people should contact their doctor. However, now, if you need medical attention after hours your first port-of-call should be to phone your regular doctor who will be able to provide advice and may direct you to your closest network A&M. As part of the initiative many of the doctors are operating an after hours telephone service that will be staffed by registered nurses.”

Patients going through an after hours A&M clinic can also expect to be seen sooner than those attending a hospital emergency department. For parents this is great news, as they will now have confidence that in the rare event they need medical treatment after hours, they can take their under 6 year old to a local A&M clinic and be seen sooner than at an ED and, in many cases, for free.

ENDS

For more information contact:

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Accident and Medical Clinics in the New After Hours Network in Auckland

Suburb	A&M clinic	Opening Hours
SOUTH and EAST		
Pukekohe	Pukekohe Family Healthcare 10 West Street Ph 237 0280	Closes 10pm
Takanini/Papakura	Takanini Care 106 Great South Road Ph 299 7670	Closes 10pm
Otara	East Tamaki Healthcare (Bairds Road) 160 Bairds Road Ph 274 3414	Closes 11pm
Otahuhu	Whitecross Otahuhu 15-23 Station Road Ph 0800 611 111	Closes 10pm
Botany	East Care 260 Botany Road Ph 277 1516	24 Hours
WEST		
Henderson	Westcare Whitecross Henderson 131 Lincoln Road Ph 0800 611 111	24 Hours
New Lynn	Westcare Whitecross New Lynn 2140 Great North Road Ph 0800 611 111	Closes 10pm
CENTRAL		
Remuera	Whitecross Ascot 90 Greenlane Road East Ph 0800 611 111	24 Hours
Three Kings	Accident and Medical Centre - Three Kings Three Kings Plaza 536 Mt Albert Road Ph 625 2999	Closes 10pm
NORTH		
Takapuna	Shorecare Ground Floor, Sovereign House, Smales Farm Ph 486 7777	24 Hours
Glenfield	Whitecross Glenfield 436-440 Glenfield Road Ph 0800 611 111	Closes 10pm

Note: In rural areas, such as Kumeu, Waiheke, Warkworth and Wellsford a 24 hour on call service is provided. If medical care is required after hours in these areas, patients should ring the local GP practice to access these services.