



Te Aho o Te Kahu Marks One Year Anniversary

One year since Te Aho o Te Kahu was established it is continuing to work hard to provide strong leadership and oversight of cancer control in Aotearoa.

"During the last twelve months, Te Aho o Te Kahu has focused on being equity-led, knowledge-driven, person and whānau-centred, and outcomes-focused," Chief Executive Professor Diana Sarfati says.

"We have made progress on a range of fronts – including responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, developing the Quality Performance Indicator programme, and being focused on how cancer care and diagnostics can be more equitable."

During the early stages of COVID-19, Agency staff worked fast to provide guidance to District Health Boards (DHBs) to ensure treatment services continued at maximum capacity.

Following the lockdown, Te Aho o Te Kahu began monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on cancer services, with a focus on equity.

The five COVID-19 reports published have provided a clear picture of how cancer services are tracking following the lockdown.

"The Agency's ability to lead the sector during the COVID-19 response showed how effective it can be."

"The support given to clinical leaders ensured health services were able to maintain their cancer treatment services."

"We know from the COVID-19 reports, cancer treatment was largely unchanged during 2020 – which is encouraging."

Te Aho o Te Kahu is focused on improving quality and consistency of cancer care across Aotearoa.

A key element in achieving this goal is the establishment of the Quality Performance Indicator (QPI) Programme.

The QPI programme will enable DHBs to compare the quality of care and outcomes for people with cancer in their DHB to other DHBs.

Current work is focused on developing indicators for colorectal, lung, head and neck, prostate and pancreatic cancers, melanoma and neuroendocrine tumours.

"The programme will provide the sector with a better understanding of where improvements can be made.

"We want to be able to provide the most reliable and solid information so that systemic changes can be implemented where needed."

A priority for Te Aho o Te Kahu is improving equity in cancer outcomes.

The Agency is working with the Māori cancer leadership network Hei Āhuru Mōwai to make sure it continues to promote change which will lead to more equitable outcomes in cancer care and diagnostics.

On February 4 – World Cancer Day - the Agency will release its State of the Nation cancer report.

The report will provide a picture on the current state of cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for cancer across the country.

"The report will help to inform policy decisions and give a bird's eye view of what is needed to improve cancer outcomes, care and diagnostics in Aotearoa."

"A large number of people have contributed to the report, and we are looking forward to releasing it."

As Te Aho o Te Kahu enters its second year, it will continue to keep all those affected by cancer as its focus, Professor Sarfati says.

"Everyone at the Agency feels the weight of responsibility in serving those living with cancer and their whānau."

"We will continue to work hard to make improvements in 2021."