



## Once again the Canterbury Health System has been tested by unprecedented events and has stepped up in response to Friday's horrific terrorist attack on our Christchurch community

It is hard to comprehend the enormity of this act of terrorism, here in our home town when 50 people were killed while going about their daily lives.

As the reality sets in for those directly affected and for those who live in our normally peaceful community we know people will need a lot of support with their mental wellbeing. People's lives have been changed forever.

My deepest sympathies are with the victims' families and friends. Christchurch is a close-knit community and, as with the earthquakes, we know the victims and their families personally – they are our friends, relatives and colleagues – and it will take a long time to come to terms with our loss.

Since the shootings on Friday we have treated 48 patients at Christchurch Hospital, ranging from young children to adults with gunshot wounds and with injuries ranging from critical to minor. Additional patients with gunshot wounds also presented to other health facilities in the community.

At the time of writing this update, there are 31 people injured in the terror attack who are still being cared for at Christchurch Hospital, with 9 in intensive care in a critical condition.

In addition, two patients have been transferred from Christchurch to Auckland – a four year old girl who is in Starship Hospital and her father who was transferred to Auckland yesterday to be with his wife and young child.

Unlike the 50 innocent victims of this shocking attack, the people who made it to Christchurch Hospital had a chance, and I'm so proud of the work of our teams. Everyone who



was resuscitated in our emergency department survived. With nine people still in intensive care and many patients needing multiple surgeries due to the complex nature of their injuries, our people are doing all they can to support the recovery of these people.

I must thank each and every one of you for the role you've played in responding to Friday's events. This extends across the whole system, from those involved in the emergency response management, including security staff protecting staff and patients, to those in the hospital caring for a large number of seriously wounded patients, moving patients across wards to make room for the critically injured, comforting the family members of victims, re-prioritising patient lists and rosters, and staff who offered



up their precious personal time to work longer hours or volunteer to help, and who were there to support their colleagues, be it with practical assistance such as food and water or a shoulder to lean on.

I also commend the incredible response from the wider health community, including emergency services, primary care, private hospitals and laboratories, and I would like to thank everyone across these services along with others throughout the country and overseas for their invaluable assistance and for their condolences. It is comforting to be reminded of the goodness and humanity of people after an event like this.

The response to this tragedy has been truly outstanding and any hospital able to deal with 48 patients with many complex gunshot injuries reflects the extraordinary people that work in our health system here in Canterbury. I am so very proud of what you have all been able to do to support and respond for our community who have been attacked in such a senseless and destructive act of terrorism.

We know from our experiences with the earthquakes that as we move from the response phase to the recovery phase, the impact of traumatic events become more apparent once the adrenaline wears off, patients are back to their families, the media leaves town and people try to return to their normal lives. The long-term consequences of traumatic events pose a new risk to our staff and the people working in our health system, those in our care and the wider community.

We expect to see an increasing demand for wellbeing support over the coming days and weeks as the reality

and enormity of what has happened in our city sinks in. My ongoing concern is for the wellbeing of our people. We know our staff are resilient but we are already seeing the impact of the last few days, with some staff experiencing shock and exhaustion and who are in need of support and time off to recharge.

We are offering additional support services for staff, and there's more on that on page 4. In the meantime, I encourage you to look after yourself, check in with those around you and access the support services we have available.

I also want to emphasise that you need to keep talking about what has happened, keep supporting and looking out for each other in the coming days, weeks and months, as the enormity of what has happened sinks in, and you reflect on your experience and try to come to terms with it. Many of us are so busy at the moment there's no time to process the atrocious events of Friday, and it's not until you stop that the reality sinks in.

The constant stream of media: the sirens, cordons, cones, and choppers are all too-familiar for those of us who were here for the quakes. If you want to talk to a trained counsellor, you can phone or text 1737 to be put through to a counsellor any time of the day or night. This is a free service for everyone.

Over the coming week, Christchurch Hospital is focusing on planning activity to manage patient flow, in particular across its acute services, surgical theatres, radiology and electives. We're postponed some elective surgery this week, Burwood has been provided with additional

support for orthopaedics. Christchurch Women's Hospital is managing well, as are our other campuses. Christchurch Outpatients appointments are going ahead as planned.

As a community I know we will support each other to get through this black day for Christchurch, and for New Zealand.

An individual has tried to drive our community apart but as Cantabrians keep repeating to each other and to our Muslim friends, ultimately the plan failed because they are us and we are them.

I spotted this simple message this morning that's a poignant reminder for us all *Love is stronger than hate*.



### Share your story or photos

If you have a story or some photos you'd like to share, please send the Communications team an email at [communications@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:communications@cdhb.health.nz).

### Where to find the latest information

To stay up-to-date with the latest news from Canterbury DHB, visit our website or follow us on Facebook [@CanterburyHealthSystem](https://www.facebook.com/CanterburyHealthSystem) or Twitter [@CanterburyDHB](https://twitter.com/CanterburyDHB).

Haere ora, haere pai  
*Go with wellness, go with care*

David Meates  
CEO Canterbury District Health Board

If you have a story idea or want to provide feedback on *CEO Update* we would love to hear from you! Please email us at [communications@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:communications@cdhb.health.nz). Please note the deadline for story submissions is midday Thursday.

If you're not a staff member and you want to subscribe to receive this newsletter every week please [subscribe here](#).

# Wellbeing of our people

As all of us now know, on Friday afternoon an unimaginable tragedy unfolded here in Christchurch. In the hours and days since, countless numbers of extraordinary people – people that are the Canterbury Health System – have responded with skill, dedication and compassion to care for those who were injured; support the many hundreds of people experiencing grief, loss and heartbreak; and return loved ones to their families.

Many of us will continue caring for victims, their friends and families, and our community in the weeks and months ahead. And others of us will be caring for those who are doing the caring. But it's important that we look after ourselves too. Because *Care Starts Here*.

The teams and individuals I've spoken with over the weekend have been really clear that one size won't fit all. And so, what we're doing is responding with a comprehensive package of staff support. A number of services, such as EAP and Workplace Support, were already available but we're increasing their capacity. Other services, such as facilitated Critical Incident Debriefs and one-on-one sessions with experienced clinical psychologists skilled in post-disaster support, are being implemented. Our first Critical Incident Debriefs have taken place this afternoon and many more are scheduled across the next week.

We're liaising closely, and sharing support services and resources, with organisations such as the New Zealand Police, the Defence Force and other agencies. We're also grateful for the many offers of assistance from clinical and other teams to provide specific packages of care and assistance to our people.

What we're not assuming is that we know best. We really need teams and individuals to tell us what would be most

helpful to them, and we'll do everything we can to deliver solutions that work. You can provide us that feedback through your line manager, clinical leader or directly via max. A number of teams and individuals have already reached out asking for help or support.

I'm aware that there are people across the organisation taking time to have the conversations that matter. I really encourage everyone to make space to care for themselves and the people around them, and reflect on their experiences of Friday and the days that have followed. I'm also thoughtful that the impact of these events on each of us is not always immediate or contained just to those who were directly involved. All of us have been touched in some way and all of us have a story to tell.

If you want to talk to someone, you can phone or text 1737 to be connected with a counsellor at any time of the day or night. This is a free service for everyone.

This message is the start of a conversation about how we take care of ourselves and those around us in the wake of Friday's atrocity. You'll hear more over the coming days and weeks as we better understand the impacts of the last few days on all of us and as we respond with services and supports.

Amidst this tragedy there have also been spectacular acts of courage, teamwork, generosity and compassion. These stories need also to be told, and we'll be creating ways for that to happen.

Finally, thank you to each and every one of you for all that you continue to do for the people of Canterbury. Go easy on yourself and be kind to the people around you.

*Michael Frampton, Chief People Officer*

Talk to a  
counsellor,  
any time.

NEED TO TALK?

1737

free call or text  
any time

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**We're here. Free call or text 1737 any time, 24 hours a day. You'll get to talk to (or text with) a trained counsellor. Our service is completely free.**

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**Whatever it is, we're here.**

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## Messages of support from around the country and the world

Since the tragic events of last Friday, many messages of love and support, and offers of help, have arrived in Canterbury DHB's Communications email inbox. Here is a selection of them.

### **Best wishes, from Emergency Medicine staff, Rotherham, England**

The team at work wants to send you all our support as you deal with the chaos around you. In our profession we all know that this is a possibility, but probably never believe that it will be us in the thick of it. I am sure you will all rise to the task of looking after the population you care for, and to regroup and look after the people you work with. Our hearts are with you all.

*From Jez Reynard, Clinical Lead for Emergency Medicine in Rotherham England.*

### **Thoughts and prayers, from Hawkes Bay**

Loving greetings to all emergency services, ambulances, operating theatres, doctors and nurses on duty at Christchurch Hospital. Blessings, blessings, blessings on you all for the huge effort in treating so many horribly damaged and traumatised people of all ages, and for the care and kindness shown to their families waiting for news. Such a display of the very best in humankind caring for those who have suffered so much from the hands of the very worst. Thoughts and prayers have been with you since the news broke.

### **Love to you all, from Anaesthetic Department, Manchester, United Kingdom (UK)**

Love and strength to you all at Christchurch Hospital from everyone in the Anaesthetic Department at Manchester Hospital's NHS Foundation Trust in the UK.

Thoughts are with you.

### **To Executive Director of Nursing, Mary Gordon**

In this extraordinarily difficult time, our thoughts are with you and the staff at Canterbury DHB, as you cope with the dreadful events of the last few days. If there is anything I, or our staff in postgraduate nursing at Otago University, can do to assist you, or the staff at Canterbury DHB at this time, please let me know.

*From Director, Centre for Postgraduate Nursing Studies, University of Otago, Associate Professor Philippa Seaton.*

### **Thank you**

Thank you to the teams who worked on the seriously injured people from the attack on 15 March. I know staff would have been exhausted.

### **Proud of staff in the Gastroenterology Department, Christchurch Hospital**

I work in the Gastroenterology Department and I want to commend the other staff in our department during the horrific events on Friday afternoon. Everyone made each other feel cared for and safe. The management team kept us as informed as they could. I left work on Friday night after lock-down feeling so proud to be a part of the staff in gastro.

### **Thank you to Christchurch Hospital Chief of Surgery Greg Robertson, from London, England**

Thank Greg Robertson for all the good help and expertise he has been giving our brothers and sisters. What a terrible event for everyone at the hospital. You have been so good and brave. Thank you so much.

### **Our thoughts are with you, from Northland District Health Board**

I thought I would send our condolences to you to pass on. Please pass on our offer of help and support. I had such high regard for the emergency teams in Christchurch. The hospital must be at capacity and staff will be needing lots of support. Our thoughts are with you all. I cannot imagine how our centre would have coped with such a mass tragedy. You should be proud.

*From Director of Nursing and Midwifery (Acting), Nursing & Midwifery Directorate, Northland District Board, Sheryll Beveridge.*

### **Offer of help**

In light of today's tragic events I email to offer assistance in any way I can. I am a British nurse with a Master's degree in Advanced Practice and an extensive Emergency experience. I do not have a work visa as I'm here on holiday however would be more than happy to volunteer in a clinical capacity, or indeed, in any other way required.

### **Thinking of you**

Thinking of you, your staff and community through this absolute tragedy. Kia kaha.

*From Acting Director of Nursing, Quality and Patient Safety, Hauora Tairāwhiti, Gisborne, Serita Karauria*

### **Thank you to Orthopaedic Outpatients**

Thank you very much to the amazing staff in the Orthopaedic Outpatients nursing clinic who looked after my dad and me during the lockdown today. You were so calm and caring, and made sure we were all ok. Dad wasn't feeling great so they found him a bed. Please pass our thanks on to these staff.

### **Staff member who went above and beyond**

Not long ago I spoke to a staff member outside Christchurch Hospital who was hugging a colleague. She told me that the woman had been at work since yesterday, despite her own son and son-in-law being shot in the attacks. I'm not sure you can get much more selfless than that.

### **Thoughts with you, from Intensive Care teams, South Australia**

Our thoughts are with our intensive care colleagues in Christchurch as you care for your community during this devastating time. On behalf of the intensive care teams at the Royal Adelaide and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals in Adelaide, South Australia.

*With sincere warm wishes, Nursing Director Intensive Care Services, Central Adelaide Local Health Network, Bernadette Grealy.*



### **Our hearts go out to you, from New York, United States of America**

A few weeks ago my wife and I visited your "Bone Shop" after my wife broke her hand. We are Americans and were spending three weeks in New Zealand. The care was excellent and remarkably personal. We were delighted with the care and many kindnesses we received while at your hospital. I'm moved to write now because of the events we're watching in Christchurch and, I assume, within the hospital. We simply loved your beautiful, welcoming city. Our hearts go out to you.

### **Thoughts with you all**

Our thoughts and well wishes are with you all at Christchurch Hospital now and over the next days and weeks as you all deal with this trauma and shock. You are all amazing people coping and dealing with this, my deepest respect and admiration is with you all. And please don't forget to take care of yourselves as well.

### **Condolences, from Hobart, Tasmania, Australia**

I would like to send my sincere apologies and condolences to all involved with the events of 15 March.

I offer prayers and thoughts to all staff and patients for the present and the future.

### **Thank you and sending support**

Please pass this message on to the staff of Christchurch Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and beyond:

Even before the awful events of the last few days we had planned to send a message of gratitude to you, but now it seems even more important that we do. Twenty years ago to this very day my wife and tiny unborn daughter were transported by air ambulance to Christchurch Hospital following a road traffic crash. Following a pulmonary embolism and head trauma my wife was admitted to ICU where she was treated for more than six weeks.

The care and professionalism that we received was so fantastic and the support offered by so many people at the hospital gave us comfort and encouragement during very difficult times.

Please know that many people around the world are sending you that same support now. My wife eventually made a good recovery and that tiny foetus is now a beautiful young woman studying at university. We hope to be able to return to beautiful Christchurch one day but in the meantime please know that all of the staff and patients are in our thoughts and prayers. We know that the same love and calm strength that we saw first-hand will bind the community together. Thank you for all that you did then and all that you continue to do now.

### Thank you

Thank you for your wonderful work you've been doing since Friday. Your staff are absolutely amazing. We live with someone who works at Christchurch Hospital and they've said it's extremely hectic. You all deserve a pat on the back.

### Offer of help

In light of the recent tragedy, if I could help out at all I have over 14 years of experience in Sterile Services as a Manager of an Acute department in the UK. I am in Oamaru but could travel, even if just to take off the pressure. I have been in emergency situations and know how stressful they can be. If I can help at all. I am more than willing to. Kia Kaha to all those involved.

### Best wishes, from Tunbridge Wells, England

Best wishes and all love and support to staff and patients after the shooting. God Bless.

### Thinking of you, from England

Thinking of all the staff at this terrible time. You are doing an awesome job and I can only imagine how difficult a time this is for you all.





### Thank you and offer of assistance, from Wellington

Thinking of you, your team, Canterbury DHB and the people of Christchurch at this heart breaking time. Thank you for all the wonderful support you are all providing to the victims and their families – under the worst circumstances. Just checking in to see if there is anything I can do to assist and support all of you. Much aroha from all of us at TAS.

*From Workforce Specialist – Strategic Workforce Services, TAS, Kamini Pather*

*(TAS works with the leaders and practitioners who plan, commission and deliver health and social care).*

### We hold you in our thoughts, from Wellington

It was during the Midwifery Council meeting on Friday we heard the news about the shootings in the Masjid Al Noor and Linwood Masjid mosques and the loss of so many lives and the wounding of many others. The scale of the tragedy has shocked us all and has resulted in a nation again in mourning alongside the people of Christchurch.

We know that so many lives are affected by terrible events like this and we know of the impact it has on health professionals who provide care for the families. Christchurch midwives will have cared for the women and babies within these families so many will be personally known to them. Also hospital services, with the need to provide care for the shooting victims, have been and will continue to be severely stretched. This has an impact on the plans that midwives have for the women for whom they are providing care.

We also are aware that the daily lives of everyone has been affected by what happened on Friday and the need for added security. As no funerals have been able to yet be held for the victims, the grief in this time of waiting remains very raw.

The Council sends its warmest wishes to all midwives, student midwives, educators, the National Office team and those in any way connected with the profession. We hold you all in our thoughts.

Kia kaha, kia manawanui.

*CEO/Registrar Midwifery Council, Sharron Cole.*

### So very sorry, from Western Australia

I am so very sorry for the traumatic events that have taken place in Christchurch. I know that you and your wonderful team are working under enormous pressure and wanted to let you know that you are in my thoughts and prayers.

### Let us know if there is anything you need, Melbourne, Australia

I just wanted let you all know we are thinking of you. I can't imagine how you are all handling this terrible situation, but I know that Christchurch nurses will be rising to the challenge, and that the victims will be getting the best care possible. If there is anything you need, please let us know.

*From Executive Director Residential and Support Services/ Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Monash Health, Cheyne Chalmers.*

### Message of love and support

Thinking of you and all our Christchurch colleagues across healthcare and emergency services who are responding to this most horrific and unbelievable act of terror. We are taking our direction from the Ministry of Health Emergency Management Team but feeling somewhat helpless and wanted to send a message of love and support through to you. I joined the Peace Vigil in Aotea Square this afternoon to join in prayer and song. Amazing show of aroha amongst a big crowd. Kia Kaha.

*From Jane Wilson, Director of Nursing, Southern DHB.*

### Condolences, from Royal College of Nursing, Dorset, United Kingdom

I am writing on behalf of the Dorset branch of the Royal College of Nursing following the tragic event that occurred in your lovely city recently. We would be most grateful if you could please pass on our condolences to all of your staff who have been affected by this appalling attack. Also, as nurses, we know when events such as these occur it can affect a whole community and especially those clinicians who cared for the wounded. Our thoughts are with you at this very sad time.

# Tributes across the city

Some staff may not have had the opportunity to go out and see the community's response to Friday's events, so here are some of the messages of support and tributes being shared across the city.





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