

## Introduction

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The New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act (2000) provided for the establishment of 21 District Health Boards (DHBs) across the country and the DHBs became effective as of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2001. Each DHB has a defined geographical boundary and is responsible for the health and wellbeing of the people that reside within its boundary. In order to meet their responsibility, the DHBs are funded by government to plan and provide the healthcare services necessary to address the health needs of their respective populations.

The New Zealand Health Strategy provides the framework for action on health in the public sector and focuses on a number of key health issues of concern that DHBs are expected to address in their role as caretakers of population health. In particular, the Strategy has identified thirteen population health objectives that provide the DHBs with a direction for action on health. These objectives include:

- ❑ Reducing smoking;
- ❑ Improving nutrition;
- ❑ Reducing obesity;
- ❑ Increasing the level of physical activity;
- ❑ Reducing the rate of suicide and suicide attempts;
- ❑ Minimizing the harm caused by alcohol and illicit drug use;
- ❑ Reducing the incidence and impact of cancer;
- ❑ Reducing the incidence and impact of cardiovascular disease;
- ❑ Reducing the incidence and impact of diabetes;
- ❑ Improving oral health;
- ❑ Reducing violence in interpersonal relationships, families, schools and communities;
- ❑ Improving the health status of people with severe mental health illness;
- ❑ Ensuring access to appropriate child health services.

Under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act (2000), DHBs are required to regularly assess and monitor health status and health need among the people whom they serve. The Ministry of Health requires DHBs around the country to have completed their first health needs assessment of resident populations by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001.

This document provides an assessment of health need for the population that resides within the Auckland DHB geographical zone (note that this zone matches the Auckland City boundary). The health needs assessment process is the first step in the service planning and funding cycle, designed to provide the necessary background information to assist in the efficient use of available funding resource. The health needs assessments produced by individual DHBs will both inform, and provide direction for the strategic planning process, which is the next step in the planning and funding cycle.

The assessment of health need contained within this document has been compiled with the assistance of the Auckland Region Decision Support Group. This group consists of

key staff from the Northern District Support Agency, the Counties-Manukau DHB and Waitemata DHB.

The report provides a first-cut, snap-shot of health need in the Auckland DHB population. The assessment has been constrained to a large extent by the data currently available to the Auckland DHB. There is a heavy reliance on hospitalization data in the document, as this data is both readily available and reasonably reliable. It is expected that as more data becomes available over time, the Auckland DHB will be able to widen the scope of analysis.

The report has been broken down into a series of sections that profile specific features relevant to population health and needs assessment in the Auckland DHB zone.

The first section of the report (Part I) provides a macro-level profile of the local community. Maps are provided depicting local physical, or geographical boundaries of interest and a demographic profile is included. The demographic sub-section provides analysis of the age structure of the Auckland DHB population, ethnicity, socio-economic status, trends in fertility, key determinants of health, population projections and analysis of population trends in distinct geographical sub-zones within the greater Auckland DHB zone. The first section of the report also includes a series of population health indicators that profile current health status in the Auckland DHB population.

The second section of the report (Part II) explores the status of the thirteen population health objectives, in relation to the Auckland DHB population. There is a heavy reliance on quantitative data in this section of the report. Existing services are profiled, the prevalence of disease in the local population is presented where relevant, service utilization trends are explored and service issues are discussed where relevant. In addition, a series of key issues arising from the analysis and a set of future tasks are outlined, where relevant, at the end of each sub-section on each of the thirteen population health objectives.

Part III of the document presents quantitative information on health status and health need among Auckland DHB population sub-groups. This section also includes preliminary analysis of service need for select service areas. The population groups included were limited to those with unique features of importance to the Auckland DHB, high health need groups, or those groups identified as high health need/priority groups in the New Zealand Health Strategy. The service areas included are services that are of significance in the New Zealand Health Strategy, demand driven services and services of particular interest to the DHB, of which little is currently known.

Part IV presents qualitative data pertaining to health need in the Auckland DHB zone. The Auckland DHB ran a series of focus group sessions in order to obtain qualitative information to compliment existing quantitative data on need among population sub-groups within the zone. The focus groups were also designed to provide essential information on health need for population groups of significance to the DHB for whom there is very little quantitative data available.

Part V is the final section of the report. This section summarizes the health need issues that have arisen (quantitative + qualitative data) for each of the thirteen health objectives, population groups and service areas profiled in the report.

There is a sub-section at the very end of Part V on the 'Next Steps' for the DHB. This sub-section briefly outlines the role of the health needs assessment in strategic planning, the need to continue with the assessment process over time and the intention to produce a 'people-friendly' report for public circulation.