Suicide Prevention Presentation

Dr Peter Watson, Clinical Director Mental Health & Addictions, Counties Manukau DHB

As part of the New Zealand contingent, Dr Peter Watson, attended the 2015 International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) on 21-25 September in Vancouver Canada. Participants spent two days visiting organisations and services in the United States and Canada to observe innovations. They then came together for a two-day combined meeting.

Pete attended a two day exchange entitled *Community Action for Suicide Prevention*. This exchange centred on suicides of people who are not known to, or receiving care from, mental health services. At the same time there was a parallel stream relating to suicide entitled *Zero Suicide in Healthcare* which looked specifically about how to reduce suicide death of people under the care of mental health services.

Pete’s presentation at the Suicide Prevention workshop for DHBs encapsulated both themes. It discusses the need for community action to prevent and respond to suicide as well as the provision of high quality mental health and addictions services.

In his presentation Pete explored the challenges of supporting communities at both the local and clinical level. He believes the key to making a difference is for more open discussion about suicide prevention, to share stories, for DHBs to provide leadership and to set suicide prevention at a community level that is values driven and inspires hope.

‘Communities’ can be defined in many different ways, however it is necessary to find the common threads of what is effective for a range of groups and create a framework that can be made applicable to any particular community. Communities can provide solutions for themselves and lessons can be learnt from others. However, this community approach must be complemented by high quality mental health and addictions services to support people, families and communities so that ***everyone experiences a life worth living.***