



LET'S OPERATE WITH RESPECT



Media Release

Auckland District Health Board signs RACS Respect Agreement

26 May 2017

Auckland District Health Board (Auckland DHB) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) aimed at building respect and improving patient safety in surgery.

The MoU, collaboration under the RACS 2015 Action Plan: Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety, is the fourth such agreement signed in New Zealand and represents a shared commitment by the organisations to address discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery and the health sector.

Professor Randall Morton, an Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgeon and Chair of the RACS New Zealand National Board, said that it was essential that organisations worked together to create safe training and work environments, free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

“In the past, bullying has been a real problem in surgery and in the health sector as a whole. It is essential, not only for the well-being of our workforce but for the well-being of our patients too, that we work together to build a culture of respect where all healthcare professionals can realise their full potential free from discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment.”

Auckland DHB CEO Ailsa Claire said Auckland DHB Board and Managers are committed to providing a safe and supportive workplace.

“Auckland DHB people are known and valued for our high quality work and the care we give to our patients. Over the past few years we have been on a journey together to improve our culture. This includes the way we respond to bullying and unacceptable behaviour and as importantly to celebrate and appreciate our staff,” says Ailsa.

“The signing of this MOU coincides with our launch of Speak Up, a programme inspired by the RACS work. Speak up was designed by a diverse group of employees from across Auckland DHB led by our Director of Surgical Services, Arend Merrie, and with union partner support. It is an important programme that will help us work together to confront harassment, discrimination and bullying, deal with the issues, and remove them,” Ailsa continues.

Specific initiatives in the MoU signed between Auckland DHB and RACS include:

- Sharing information and resources between the two organisations for education and training.
- Supporting greater diversity within the surgical profession.
- Working together to ensure that surgeons and trainees are able to undertake training and education in relation to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.
- Sharing information about on how complaints relating to unacceptable behaviour are managed.

In May 2016, RACS launched Let’s Operate with Respect – a campaign to help deal effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery. RACS has also published a dedicated new section of its website, About Respect.

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About RACS

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in New Zealand and Australia. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7,000 surgeons and 1,300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

www.surgeons.org

About Auckland District Health Board

Auckland DHB was established under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote, and protect the health of communities, integrate health services, especially primary and secondary care services and promote effective care or support for those in need of health services or disability support. Auckland DHB has three major facilities: Auckland City Hospital, Starship Children's Hospital and Greenlane Clinical Centre. Auckland City Hospital is New Zealand's largest public hospital as well as the largest clinical research facility. There are approximately one million patient contacts each year, including hospital and outpatient services.

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