

Community & Public Health

Health begins where people work, live, learn and play. Welcome to Community and Public Health - the part of the Health New Zealand - Canterbury Waitaha that keeps people out of the health care system.

Why specialise in public health?

Public health has been defined as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organised efforts of society”.

Public health medicine mostly doesn't involve patient care; it's about the many things we can do as a community to keep people healthy - from things like preventing the spread of measles to making the healthy choice the easy choice for children in schools to developing regional alcohol harm reduction strategies.

Career prospects

Public health physicians are employed in a wide range of organisations, including District Health Board public health services (like C&PH) and planning and funding divisions, universities, government departments and non-government organisations.

Medical kaimahi (staff) in our service

The Public Health Specialist Team at C&PH consists of six public health physicians and one non-medical public health specialist who provide professional leadership and are responsible for the professional quality of work at C&PH.

Three public health physicians are designated as Medical Officers of Health, and have regulatory powers and responsibilities under the Health Act 1956 and other public health legislation.

Public Health Medicine Registrars are also members of the Public Health Specialist Team. Registrars are expected to contribute to a wide range of C&PH service work, as well as completing formal projects. Currently CPH has one registrar position. Registrars are appointed via the NZCPHM Training Programme.

All about our service

C&PH is a regional public health service for Canterbury, South Canterbury and the West Coast. In Christchurch we have four teams, focusing on health protection (communicable disease control, environmental health, alcohol regulation), public health information, health in all policies, and community engagement. We have district offices in Timaru and Greymouth. A public health specialist provides the professional lead for each team.

Earthquake response and recovery has been a major focus of Christchurch work since September 2010. We are also working with the other two public health services in Dunedin and Nelson towards alignment of public health services across the South Island.

Our Christchurch office is at 310 Manchester St, at the edge of Christchurch's Central Business District.

Training in our service

Training in public health medicine is organised by the NZCPHM Training Programme - all C&PH registrars must be part of the Training Programme. Registrars are expected to contribute to a mix of service and

project work. Training days are organised by the national Training Programme throughout the year. Registrars are also supported to attend conferences and in-house training.

Research

We collaborate with community researchers on diverse topics. One of our public health specialists is also employed part time by the University of Otago, Christchurch and all members of our public health specialist team contribute to undergraduate medical student teaching in public health.

SMO / Kaimahi (staff) support

One of our public health specialist team acts as workplace supervisor for registrars, with other specialists offering training during rotations to their teams. Registrars attend specialist team meetings, and work closely with other public health staff. Registrars are not on call after hours.

Advantages to training at Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board
C&PH has an excellent team of supportive medical and non-medical staff. The Canterbury earthquakes have provided our community with a greater understanding of what public health contributes, alongside enormous opportunities to make a difference to the things that influence our community's health into the future.

Enquiries

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How to apply

Applications for public health training are dealt with by the NZ College of Public Health Medicine. The NZCPHM website is very informative and clearly sets out the application and selection process. For successful candidates the first part of training is in an academic setting where registrars complete a MPH degree as their part one of training. After part one there is usually a period in a DHB public health unit followed by other placements. Training finishes with passing a final exam at the end of the four year programme. The training programme for registrars is coordinated by the national College office.