



**REVIEW OF BREAST SCREENING IN THE CAPITAL  
AND COAST DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD**

*Prepared by*

**Service Planning and Funding  
Capital and Coast District Health Board**

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## Executive Summary

Maori women in C&CDHB have reduced breast screening coverage, and Pacific women are significantly less likely to be screened. Health promotion to these two groups is therefore a high priority.

With the change in government policy extending the screening age from 45 to 70 years, effort will need to be directed at advising women of this change, particularly women in disadvantaged groups.

## Introduction

Reducing cancer is one of the 13 population health objectives in The New Zealand Health Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Consistent with this, an objective in both the Capital and Coast District Strategic Plan 2002-7 and the District Annual Plan for 2003-4 is to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer. One activity identified in this year's District Annual Plan which will assist to achieve this objective is to review breast screening coverage in the district. This report reviews most recent, available data.

## Background to the National Breast Screening Programme

About one in 10 women in New Zealand will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. In the group of women who develop breast cancer 75% are over 50 years of age. While some women who develop breast cancer have a family history of the disease, most women have no close relatives with the disease.<sup>2</sup>

A national breast screening programme has been developed which aims to reduce deaths from breast cancer by detecting cancers when they are small. Mammograms are able to detect breast cancers at an early stage and this reduces subsequent treatment required and improves clinical outcomes.

The Breast Screen Aotearoa Programme was established in 1998. The objective of the programme is to encourage women aged 50-64 to have a mammogram every two years. Free mammograms are offered to all asymptomatic<sup>3</sup> women in this group. In recent weeks the Government has announced that it will extend the breast screening programme to women aged 45 to 70. The implementation of this is currently being planned. The programme is delivered throughout New Zealand by six lead providers. BreastScreen Central provides services to the C&CDHB district.

Women can be referred for breast screening by a GP, or can self-refer to the programme by phoning 0800 270 200 or by attending a mobile screening unit.

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<sup>1</sup> Minister of Health. 2000. *The New Zealand health strategy*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from the BreastScreen Aotearoa website [www.healthywomen.org.nz](http://www.healthywomen.org.nz)

<sup>3</sup> Women with breast symptoms are referred to their GP for investigation through the diagnostic breast service.

## Regional Screening Services in Wellington

Locally, regional breast screening services are provided by Hutt Valley District Health Board. Screening is provided through sites at Hutt and Wakefield Hospitals and utilising a mobile unit that travels the greater Wellington area on a set two yearly schedule. All women whose mammograms are considered normal are recalled every two years until they are 65 years of age.

The following services are provided by the programme:-

- Mammography
- Recall for assessment if abnormalities are found
- Diagnosis of abnormalities through biopsy
- Referral to treatment services if required

The Service is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team. The team includes a Manager and Clinical Director who work together to ensure that the Service performs to a high clinical and operational standard. A Data Manager and the administration team manage all core administration functions including referral, invitation, recall and the 0800 number. Medical Radiation Technologists are employed to perform the mammograms. Radiologists read all mammograms<sup>4</sup> and provide assessment services. Women requiring further investigation are assessed by a multi-disciplinary assessment team comprising a Medical Radiation Technologist, Radiologist, Breast Surgeon, Pathologist, and a Breastcare Nurse. The programme has very strict national policy and quality standards that are monitored through the Independent Monitoring group. The time from screening to a final diagnosis should be no more than 28 days for the majority of women.

In addition, the local programme provides health promotion on breast screening. One full time Health Promoter liaises with GP's and provides generic health promotion. The Pacific Health Promotion Team supports the programme and consists of 2.6 FTE staff who have been recruited to take into account the different Pacific Island groups.

Regional Screening Services also contracts with seven Maori Health Providers in the Region to provide "by Maori for Maori" health promotion to Maori women in the community. The seven providers work collaboratively as a group to achieve health gains for Maori women. This group is called *Mana Wahine*. Within the C&CDHB district the four providers contracted to provide these services are Hora te Pai, Ora Toa Health Unit, Maraeroa Marae Health Clinic and Te Ngawari Hauora. These contracts are co-ordinated and monitored by a Maori breast screening Coordinator.

The Breast Screening Health Promoter also holds health promotion sessions with Asian communities from time-to-time.

Health promotion initiatives in the 03-04 year for the CCDHB district included the following:-

- Introduction of the GP funding pilot
- Pacific Screening week at PIC church in Newtown
- Mobile screening services at Waikanae, Paraparaumu and Porirua.

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<sup>4</sup> Mammograms are read "double blind" by two radiologists

The 04/05 health promotion programme is currently being finalised. Several initiatives planned include involvement in the Creekfest in Porirua, and health promotion to clients in rest homes and women working in factories.

## Screening Coverage

The overall goal of BreastScreen Aotearoa is to reduce the incidence of breast cancer by 30%. In order to achieve this goal a coverage rate of 70% of the eligible population screened every two years is required. The aim to achieve a two-yearly coverage rate of 70% converts to an annual goal of 35% of eligible women being screened.

Many women were screened in the first 18 months of the programme being set up which has produced a “peak and trough” cycle of screening in the second year. It will take up to 10 years for this trend to even out. Due to a two year screening cycle it is usual to view two years of data to assess screening coverage.

In the two financial years 2001/02 and 2002/03 overall screening coverage in C&CDHB was 31% and 24% for each of these years (Table 1 and 2). However, in this period there was reduced screening in Maori and Pacific populations. Of all groups, Pacific women have significantly reduced coverage. In 2001/02 and 2002/03 the screening coverage for Pacific women ranged between 11-13%. For Maori, screening coverage ranged between 20-25% in 2001/02 and was 15-19% in 2002/3.

**Table 1 - Screening 2001-2002**  
**[Target – 35% of the population screened per annum]**

	Ethnicity	Totals	Population*	% screened
Porirua/Kapiti	Maori	172	690	25%
	Pacific	78	615	13%
	Other	2481	6410	39%
Wellington	Maori	120	610	20%
	Pacific	47	440	11%
	Other	3175	10970	29%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6073</b>	<b>19735</b>	<b>31%</b>

*\*The population is derived from the 1996 census and is indicative only*

**Table 2 - Screening 2002-2003**  
**[Target – 35% of the population screened per annum]**

	Ethnicity	Totals	Population*	% screened
Porirua/Kapiti	Maori	132	710	19%
	Pacific	85	635	13%
	Other	1695	6570	26%
Wellington	Maori	91	620	15%
	Pacific	54	460	12%
	Other	2847	11350	25%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4904</b>	<b>20345</b>	<b>24%</b>

*\*The population is derived from the 1996 census and is indicative only*

Tables 3-6 identify the number of women screened by month and is analysed by ethnicity. Numbers screened by month in the various populations are variable, and relate to either recall from previous screening and screening promotion in various areas.

National data on screening coverage in Asian women is not routinely collected. Local information could be provided if required.

### **Discussion and summary**

Maori women have reduced breast screening coverage, and Pacific women are significantly less likely to have been screened. Health promotion to these two groups is therefore a high priority.

With the change in government policy extending the screening age from 45 to 70 years, effort will need to be directed at advising women of this change, particularly women in disadvantaged groups.

**Table 3 – Breast screening in Kapiti/Porirua – July 01-June 03**

	Jul-01	Aug-01	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Total	Popn*	%
Maori	15	20	27	17	25	20	23	14	4	2	3	2	172	690	25%
Pacific	1	3	6	6	14	14	20	12	2	0	0	0	78	615	13%
Other	297	395	399	437	231	107	207	134	86	53	79	56	2481	6410	39%

*\*The population is derived from the Census in 1996 and is indicative only. Volumes in each area can fluctuate due to the two yearly mobile screening cycle.*

**Table 4– Breast screening in Porirua & Kapiti - July 02 – June 03**

	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Total	Popn*	%
Maori	6	53	5	1	5	7	7	4	8	15	21	132	710	20%
Pacific	4	60	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	4	0	85	635	11%
Other	90	191	53	54	52	58	106	100	250	365	376	1695	6570	29%

*\*The population is derived from the Census in 1996 and is indicative only. Volumes in each area can fluctuate due to the two yearly mobile screening cycle.*

**Table 5 – Breast screening in Wellington – July 01 – June 02**

	Jul-01	Aug-01	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Total	Popn*	%
Maori	6	10	5	7	12	6	23	22	8	9	4	8	120	610	19%
Pacific	3	3	1	8	3	5	3	8	4	3	5	1	47	440	13%
Other	279	259	254	278	374	167	270	380	218	191	290	215	3175	10970	26%

*\*The population is derived from the Census in 1996 and is indicative only. Volumes in each area can fluctuate due to the two yearly mobile screening cycle.*

**Table 6 – Breast screening in Wellington - July 02 – June 03**

	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Total	Popn*	%
Maori	12	15	12	8	2	4	10	6	11	8	3	91	620	15%
Pacific	4	8	17	14	0	1	5	0	2	0	3	54	460	12%
Other	247	302	357	386	86	131	319	379	209	200	231	2847	11350	25%

*\*The population is derived from the Census in 1996 and is indicative only. Volumes in each area can fluctuate due to the two yearly mobile screening cycle.*