

## Join Dr Barry Snow in a rare opportunity to hear and talk with Dr Atul Gawande

The Health Quality & Safety Commission is urging people working in the health and disability and aged care sectors to take full advantage of a rare opportunity to hear and talk with one of the world's most respected and forward-thinking health communicators, American surgeon and writer Dr Atul Gawande.

Auckland DHB's Adult Medical Services Director and consultant neurologist, Dr Barry Snow will join Dr Gawande who is headlining a day-long forum in Wellington on Monday 18 May.

Commission chair, Professor Alan Merry, says: 'Dr Gawande encourages the kind of fresh thinking about health care improvement the Commission supports here in New Zealand, so we are delighted to be able to host this event.'

Dr Gawande writes about health for the *New Yorker* magazine and is the author of bestsellers such as *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* and, most recently, *Being Mortal: Illness, Medicine, and What Matters in the End*.

Prior to the forum, Dr Gawande is appearing in two public events at the 2015 Auckland Writers Festival, whose director, Anne O'Brien, describes him as 'a brilliant mind; a world-leader in how to make our experiences in health care safer and healthier, what it's like to get old and where our ideas about death have gone wrong'.

The forum will focus on themes of teamwork and communication, and aged and end of life care, drawing on Dr Gawande's books – which also include *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance*, and *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*. It follows him giving last year's prestigious Reith Lectures for the BBC.

In *Being Mortal*, Dr Gawande argues for innovative approaches to aged and end of life care, and supports a greater emphasis on the wishes of patients and their families instead of being hidebound by inflexible medical and aged care systems.

'*Time* magazine called *Being Mortal* mandatory reading for every American,' says Prof Merry. 'I would call it mandatory reading for everyone period, because everyone will go through one or more of the experiences it examines – terminal illness, growing old and

dying. No one, therefore, should miss what Dr Gawande has to say about better tailoring our handling of these experiences to the individual involved.'

Among those joining Dr Gawande and Dr Snow for the forum are Professor Jonathon Gray, director of the Ko Awatea centre for health system innovation and improvement; Dr Brian Ensor, director of palliative care at Wellington's Mary Potter Hospice; Dr Geoff Green, geriatrician and clinical head of the service for older people at Counties Manukau Health; and Ombudsman Professor Ron Paterson.

Dr Gawande is a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and professor in both the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Department of Surgery at Harvard Medical School.

The forum is at the Visa Platinum Gallery, Te Papa, Wellington, 9.30am-4.30pm, Monday 18 May. The fee is \$280. Booking is essential via either [the HQSC website](#) (where you can also see the forum programme) or by emailing [info@hqsc.govt.nz](mailto:info@hqsc.govt.nz).

At the Auckland Writers Festival, Dr Gawande is in conversation with Commission board member Dr David Galler, an intensive care specialist at Middlemore Hospital, on Saturday 16 May, 5.30pm; and in a panel conversation on the future on Sunday 17 May, 3pm, both in the Aotea Centre's ASB Theatre. Tickets for these events, priced from \$15, go on public sale at 9am on Thursday 19 March from [Ticketmaster](#).

For further information on the forum with Dr Gawande, contact Commission communications coordinator Guy Somerset, (04) 913 1745, 021 813 591, [guy.somerset@hqsc.govt.nz](mailto:guy.somerset@hqsc.govt.nz).

For further information on Dr Gawande's Auckland Writers Festival appearances, contact Penny Hartill, director, hPR, (09) 445 7525, 021 721 424, [penny@hartillpr.co.nz](mailto:penny@hartillpr.co.nz).