



Media release

23 April 2015

Auckland DHB progressing Sustainable Transport Project

Charles Montgomery, best-selling author and expert on how to build cities that make people happier and healthier spoke to health professionals at Auckland DHB yesterday (22 April).

Charles was invited to present as part of the Sustainable Transport Project. The Project is aimed at improving the experience of travelling to Auckland and Greenlane Hospitals for patients, visitors and staff.

Mr Montgomery reports that happiness and sense of connectedness are fundamental to healthier communities and backs this up with real examples where building, or reconfiguring cities which allow people to move more have had a direct benefit on health and happiness levels.

He says, "People talk about diet, but simply walking can have a profound benefit on some of our major health challenges such as diabetes, heart disease and also on mental health and wellbeing. Walking or cycling has a tremendous impact on mood."

"A study in the United Kingdom has found that people who switched from driving their car to walking, cycling or public transport were happier over time. The exercise and the connection to the place that comes with the walk made people happier and healthier," he said.

A recent survey at ADHB has provided a wealth of information about the travel habits and parking challenges faced by staff, patients and visitors to ADHB. Over 3,500 responses were received through online, print and face to face sources.

Ian D'Young, Project Manager and Improvement Specialist said, "the survey results showed one in four patients or visitors report feeling angry or stressed by their journey to our hospitals or clinics. Also, 89% of staff feel angry or stressed by their journey to work, however, those who walked or ran to work were less frustrated."

He said that although the majority of staff travel to work in cars, many of them are happy to vary their mode of travel and use public transport, walk or cycle, but this was dependent on factors like the weather, convenience and the cost of alternative travel.

“It also depends on people’s family situations. If, like me you had children to drop off day-care or school then you are more likely to travel by car,” Mr D’Young said.

Mr D’Young said data and ideas which have been received are being consolidated and the DHB will look at implementing a number of quick wins, providing travel information and promoting better travel planning to staff in the short term. Moving forward there are plans to hold a number of workshops with staff, patients, residents and local businesses to find longer term solutions, in association with Auckland Transport.

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