

Kidney Health

NEW ZEALAND

Prevention • Support • Research

WINTER 2025

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Welcome to the first Kidney Health NZ Newsletter of 2025!

Kia ora koutou,

As we move into the second half of 2025, I'm incredibly proud of the momentum Kidney Health New Zealand has built this year. Our purpose remains clear: to improve outcomes for people living with chronic kidney disease across Aotearoa through advocacy, early detection, equity, and support.

Almost one year on from the launch of *Kiri*, our digital assistant, we're thrilled with the level of engagement it has received. Hundreds of New Zealanders have accessed Kiri for trusted, personalised advice on managing kidney health, any time of day or night. It's been deeply rewarding to see how this innovative tool is already making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Our community kidney screening events have also grown significantly. This year alone, we've reached over 1,500 people, including many in high-risk communities. These events are more than just early detection, they offer education, connection, and a sense of empowerment, helping prevent kidney disease before it becomes life-limiting.

In parallel, we've remained focused on system-level change. We continue to advocate for improvements to the National Travel Assistance scheme, equitable access to essential medications through PHARMAC, and stronger support for patients and their whānau. Our leadership in establishing the National Kidney Collective reflects our belief that collaboration is essential to improving outcomes nationwide.

We're also continuing to invest in education. Several projects are underway to support kidney patients, their whānau, and carers to better understand kidney disease. This includes updated written resources and a new suite of explainer videos, designed to make complex kidney information more accessible and culturally appropriate.

I'd like to take a moment to sincerely acknowledge the many individuals across the motu who have made personal donations to Kidney Health New Zealand. These generous, often quiet contributions, form the backbone of our work. Every dollar makes a difference – and it's the combined power of these individual gifts that helps us deliver real change in the lives of kidney patients and their families.

A special acknowledgement goes to Alister Belamy, the Christchurch Dialysis Unit, and the estate of Annette Jill Curd for their generous contributions. Your commitment to kidney health has made a real and lasting impact.

This newsletter shares more about the work we've been doing, the stories that inspire us, and what's ahead. Thank you for being part of the KHNZ journey. With your continued support, we're building something powerful – together. 🌟

Ngā mihi nui,

Andrew Baker

Chief Executive

Kidney Health New Zealand



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National Kidney Month


Otahuhu Event – 1st March

On Saturday the 1st of March, Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at the Ōtāhuhu Health Expo, at the Ōtāhuhu Community Centre, Ōtāhuhu.

This event was supported by Rotary Ōtāhuhu who provided a sausage sizzle; there was music, Harold the Giraffe from Life Education Trust, a bouncy castle and other children's activities.



Along with Kidney Health NZ, other health screening and education teams were present. These included Bowel Screening, Breast Screening Aotearoa, Asian Family Services, and the Breast Cancer Foundation.

In total, we provided screening and education to 29 people. 




Pasifika Auckland – 8th and 9th March

On Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th of March, Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at the Pasifika Festival at Western Springs, Auckland.

Pasifika is a celebration of all things Pacific. Eleven Pacific nations are represented over the weekend, showcasing traditional and contemporary music and dance, and island foods and crafts from Samoa, Niue, Tonga, Cook Is, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Fiji, Tahiti, Hawaii, and Aotearoa. This is an annual festival and well supported by the Auckland community.

In total, 117 people were tested over the 2 days.

The 2025 Pasifika Festival event at Western Springs was a valuable networking opportunity for KHNZ to

work with a diverse community, 48% of those tested on the day identified were Polynesian. 




Parliamentary Testing – 12th March

NZ Parliamentary Services invited the team at Kidney Health NZ to provide kidney health testing at Parliament on Wednesday 12th of March.

Annette Richards, Health, Safety & Wellbeing



Coordinator at Parliament arranged a schedule of appointments which was both well organised, and had great uptake, with 74 people tested.

As well as providing health testing and education about the risk factors that contribute to kidney disease, it was an excellent opportunity to talk with politicians and their Executive Assistants and Advisors about kidney disease. 

World Kidney 2025 (WKD) – Thursday 13th March

World Kidney Day is an internationally supported event where kidney organisations throughout the world bring awareness to kidney disease by offering information, kidney function screening or social media campaigns.



The theme for WKD 2025 was, Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect early, protect kidney health

Kidney Health NZ attended two events on WKD 2025. One was in support of ADHB Renal Services in Auckland, and the other was at Riverside Market in

Christchurch. 260 people received kidney function testing on WKD 2025.

Many thanks to all those who attended, and special thanks to ADHB Renal Services for collaborating with us in Auckland. 🍷

Auckland Testing – World Kidney Day

On 13th of March, Kidney Health NZ supported the ADHB Renal Services team at Auckland City Hospital to host a World Kidney Day (WKD) event between 9 AM and 4 PM. The event aimed to raise awareness about kidney disease, emphasizing early detection and prevention.

Kidney Health NZ provided both the meters and creatinine testing strips to the team. Auckland-based Renal Educator Sini Taunaholo-Ropeti was also in attendance and supported the ADHB team.

This testing event successfully highlighted the importance of early detection, and engaging the community to provide cardiovascular-renal-metabolic checks and health education. On this day, more than



300 people visited the information stand, with 230 given kidney health checks. 🍷

Riverside Market – World Kidney Day

On Thursday 13th of March. Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at Riverside Market to the public to raise awareness around kidney health.

KHNZ's South Island Renal Educator, Becs Hayston organised the event, along with a local dialysis unit team member. The two provided cardio-renal-metabolic testing and education. A haemodialysis patient also attended for people to talk to about her experience with kidney disease.

This World Kidney Day event at Riverside Market in Christchurch was a great way to bring awareness to kidney health.

Being a busy spot for lunch-goers and tourists alike, the testing brought in people from an array of countries and ethnicities who all learnt the importance



of caring for kidney health for themselves and their whānau.

30 people were tested during this event. 🍷

African Health Expo – 15th March

On Saturday 15th of March, Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at the African Health Expo at Wesley Community Centre in Sandringham, Auckland.

This was the inaugural African Health Expo and was well supported by local health providers.

48 people were tested during this event.

The African Health Expo event in Sandringham, Auckland was a valuable networking opportunity for KHNZ to work with a diverse community, the majority of whom were from the African continent, although some were from the Middle East and Caribbean regions.

KHNZ appreciate being able to offer free kidney health checks and provide education to this group, many of whom have arrived in NZ as refugees, and



English is not their first language. They often face racism and discrimination, are building new lives for themselves and their families, and are experiencing different challenges to what they have experienced in their homelands, including navigating a different health system. Providing free health screening builds trust and empowerment for those who are interested in managing their personal and family health, and in turn, supports wider access to improved health outcomes for this community. [D](#)

Makaurau Testing – 16th March

On Sunday 16th of March, Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at He Rangi Ora, a hapū event at Makaurau Marae in Mangere.

Hauora services delivered a wide range of whānau health initiatives to Te Ahiwaru hapū. The day was hosted by Te Ahiwaru Trust in collaboration with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

39 people were tested.

KHNZ appreciate being able to offer free kidney health checks and provide education to Te Ahiwaru hapū, and from the results we gathered, this mahi was extremely important if we are to support the



prevention of CKD, and to slow down its progression.

We were also able to network with other Iwi Hauora providers, such as Te Hononga o Tamaki, and have been invited to be part of other marae-based hauora screening events. [D](#)

Have a Heart Expo – 22nd March

On Saturday 22nd of March, Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at the Have a Heart Expo at the Whakatāne War Memorial Hall.

There was good media coverage of this event, both on social media and we had two interviews with Colin Magee of Radio 1XX, talking about our free kidney health checks, and the importance of early detection of risk factors in order to slow down the progression of kidney disease.



These interviews can be found on our Facebook page.

A total of 54 people were tested. [D](#)

Canterbury Polyfest – 22nd March

On Saturday 22nd of March, Kidney Health NZ celebrated PolyFest in Canterbury by providing free kidney health checks and health education at North Hagley Park, raising awareness around kidney health.

KHNZ's South Island Renal Educator, Becs Hayston organised the event. She was accompanied by KHNZ Renal Educator Sini Taunaholo-Ropeti and Contract Renal Educator Linda Smith.

69 people were tested throughout the day,

This PolyFest event in Christchurch was a great way to bring awareness to kidney health. Being a busy spot for an at-risk community, the testing brought in people from an array of Pasifika ethnicities who all learnt the importance of caring for kidney health for themselves and their whānau. 🌺



ProCare Testing - 29th March

On the 29th of March, ProCare hosted a Hauora Day for their churches at the Grace International church in Glen Innes, Auckland.

The ProCare HVAZ programme that was hosted by the Grace International Church in Glen Innes was a valuable networking opportunity for KHNZ to work with the Pacific community. 95.8% of those tested on the day identified were Polynesian (Pacific & Māori).

What sets the Healthy Village Action Zone (HVAZ) apart is its unique approach, collaborating with churches to drive community action and self-determination, resulting in better health outcomes for Pacific families.

ProCare and ADHB jointly fund the HVAZ programme to 14 churches within the ADHB region. This programme serves over 2,000 members.

72 people were tested on the day.

KHNZ appreciate being able to offer free kidney health checks at the ProCare event and to continue to provide testing and education to those who are interested in managing their personal health, their whānau health, and through this outreach, to improve the wider health outcomes for this community. 🌺



Moana Nui – 29th March

On Saturday 29th of March, Kidney Health NZ celebrated Moana Nui Festival in Dunedin by providing free kidney health checks and health education at Forsyth Barr Stadium, raising awareness around kidney health.

Offering free kidney health checks at Moana Nui in Dunedin was a great way to bring awareness to kidney health. Being a busy spot for an at-risk community, the testing brought in people from an array of ethnicities who all learnt the importance of caring for kidney health for themselves and their whānau.

55 people were tested throughout the day. 🍌



Rehua Marae Testing – 10th April

On the 10th of April Kidney Health NZ provided free kidney health checks and health education at Rehua Marae, for Kaumātua.

This Rehua Marae Kaumātua event in Christchurch was a valuable networking opportunity for KHNZ to work with this high-risk community, and 100% of

those tested on the day identified as Māori. This is a fantastic result.

We plan to maintain a relationship with Rehua Marae via Linda Wood. We have planned a further testing event in May at their request to test remaining Kaumātua, who wish to learn about the health of their kidneys. 🍌



Conclusion

Diabetes and hypertension are the leading treatable causes of end stage renal disease in Aotearoa New Zealand for Māori and Pasifika.

Detecting both diabetes and hypertension early, and managing them well leads to better health outcomes, with improved quality of life for the individual and their whānau.

Managing risk factors well is also an important aim if we are to slow down the progression of chronic kidney disease and reduce the likelihood of the need for long term renal replacement therapies, such as dialysis and transplantation. This, in turn, reduces the

financial burden to the health system.

Many thanks to Ōtāhuhu Health Expo, Pasifika Festival, NZ Parliamentary Services, ADHB Renal Services, Riverside Market, The African Health Expo, Makaurau Marae, Have a Heart Expo, Canterbury Polyfest, the ProCare Team, Moana Nui Festival and Rehua Marae for allowing us to attend your events and offer kidney function screening to your communities.

Special thanks to Community Organizations Grants Scheme (COGS) for their financial support, which enables us to deliver this important service. 🍌

Christchurch Dialysis Unit – **CITY2SURF**


On Sunday the 16th of March, a team from Christchurch Hospital's dialysis unit took part in the City2Surf to help raise awareness for World Kidney Day, and kidney disease.

Participating in the event wearing 'Are your kidneys okay' and 'World Kidney Day' t-shirts, the team hoped to not only raise awareness of World Kidney Day, but to also help raise awareness of kidney disease in general.

Acute dialysis unit registered nurse Ayla Paladin told KHNZ that the team has noticed more people

needing dialysis - and want to raise awareness about the importance of kidneys to people's overall health.

Once the team finished the event, they handed out brochures about kidney disease to other participants - and the public.

We want to thank the team for their dedication to preventing kidney disease – and their efforts to raise awareness at the City2Surf event. 



Alister Belamy – Rotorua Half Marathon

As many of you may know, Alister Belamy, known as [allisterruns0to21](#) on Instagram, has been training since June 2024 for the Rotorua half Marathon that was held in May 2025. Inspired by his mum, Allister has made huge strides during his year of training, participating in the Taupo 5km in August 2024 and Kapiti 10km near the end of 2024.

On the first weekend of May 2025, Alister set off to complete his first half marathon. Completing the marathon in two hours and thirty-seven minutes, Kidney Health NZ is extremely impressed at Alister's commitment to achieving his goal, as well as thankful for the awareness that he has raised.

Alister completed the marathon wearing a Kidney Health NZ shirt and raised an outstanding \$1,065 for our organisation. 🙌





PRESS RELEASE

Kidney Health New Zealand is calling for Chronic Kidney Disease to be listed as a top health priority for the Government as New Zealand's dialysis units struggle to cope with growing numbers of patients.

KHNZ Board Member and kidney specialist Dr Curtis Walker (Te Whakatōhea, Ngāti Porou) says chronic kidney disease is on the rise in New Zealand and long-term planning and a strategy are urgently needed.

There are 31 dialysis units across New Zealand. Most are already operating at capacity, and several large centres are dialysing around the clock, with four patients dialysed per machine in a 24-hour period.

"On World Kidney Day, we are calling on the Government to prioritise kidney disease prevention because, if caught early, it can be managed and dialysis is not required. Kidney failure often goes undetected, yet kidney health can be easily checked through a simple blood test through your healthcare provider."

Dr Walker says one in 10 people in New Zealand have kidney disease, and many don't know until they become symptomatic.

Rates are higher for people with high blood pressure, diabetes and those who are of Māori, Pacific Island, or South Asian descent. There are also inequities in access to dialysis facilities nationwide, particularly in rural areas where Māori are disproportionately represented.

"We need our kidneys to survive. If our kidneys don't work well enough, we generally feel OK right until they're working at about 10 percent - which is too late.

"Around that stage, people start feeling tired, their appetite might go down, and they might start to feel sick. It can also change your temperature sensation - people can feel cold. They keep the heaters on, wear two jerseys and yet they still don't feel warm. At that stage, the only way to feel better or to live longer is to have dialysis or a kidney transplant. Otherwise, the symptoms of feeling tired, cold, and unwell progress and eventually this leads to death."

Kidney disease is usually silent and is treatable, so early detection and intervention are cost-effective.

Reducing the number of patients reaching end-stage kidney disease (needing dialysis) would also reduce the escalating financial burden of dialysis on the health system.

Dialysis treatment involves being connected to a machine for 15-30 hours per week and has a large impact on the quality of life and overall wellbeing of individuals.

There are around 400 people on the waiting list for a kidney transplant in New Zealand.

Dr Curtis Walker speaks to RNZ

Kidney Health NZ Board Member and Manawatu nephrologist Dr Curtis Walker spoke to RNZ about early detection; the interview can be heard by scanning the QR Code.



RESEARCH AVAILABLE

IMPEDE-PKD



The IMPEDE-PKD study focus is:

Testing whether metformin, an existing medicine for diabetes, can prevent decreases in kidney function for people with Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD).

Do you or anyone you know have Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD)?

The IMPEDE-PKD Team are inviting people who have ADPKD, who are between 18 and 70 years old, and are not taking metformin (a medicine for diabetes) to consider a research study.

IMPEDE-PKD are studying whether metformin is helpful in protecting kidney function for people with ADPKD.

This research study will involve:

- **taking medication (metformin or sugar pill) for 2 years and 3 months**
- **having regular health review including blood and urine tests**
- **filling out questionnaires about health and symptoms.**

During the research study, you will meet a study nurse 4 times in-person and 9 time over the phone or video call (based on your preference). Each meeting will be 30 to 60 minutes long.

If you, or someone you know, who would like to be part of this study, please contact Rachel: impede-pkd.nz@otago.ac.nz or 03 244 1979 or 0221 351 300

Alternatively, please **visit <https://kidneytrials.com/impede-pkd/>** to get involved.



Kidney Stories & Experiences

Have you donated a kidney? Received a kidney? Or been on dialysis? We want to hear your story! 'Transplant Stories from around the Motu' is a project aimed at raising awareness of live donation, kidney transplantation and the experience of being on dialysis.

Launched during National Kidney month in 2023, we hope this library of experiences can help alleviate the fears of kidney failure - and help to encourage more donations.

If you'd like to check this library out, visit <https://www.kidney.health.nz/information-and-resources/stories/>.

We're looking for people from all ages and all walks of life to contribute to this library, so if you'd like to share your experience with us - please get in touch at sam.faalilo@kidney.health.nz.

Kidney Support in New Zealand

Our 0800 543 639 support line is open Monday to Friday - 8.30am – 5pm

Nationwide

Kidney Health NZ Support Line

info@kidney.health.nz – 0800 543 639

Kidney Kids -

office@kidneykids.org.nz - 0800 215 437

Facebook Support Groups

Aotearoa Kidney Whanau

PKD Collective NZ

Kidney Donor Whanau

Wellington Kidney Support Society (WELLKiSS)

Otago Kidney Whanau

North Island

The Kidney Society (previously ADKS)

kidneysociety@adks.co.nz - 0800 235 711

Wellington Kidney Support Society

Mattytoole@gmail.com

Taranaki Kidney Support Group

margaretshome@xtra.co.nz

Bay of Plenty Support Group

Kaywyn.McKenzie@bopdhb.govt.nz

Whanganui Support Group

gbullock@xtra.co.nz

South Island

Christchurch Kidney Society

03 341 0906

Ashburton Kidney Society

ashburtonkidneysociety@gmail.com

Otago Kidney Society

info@oks.nz

Australia

Kidney Health Australia

careteam@kidney.org.au - 1800 454 363

Thank you to the following organisations for their support!

If you or your organisation would like to support Kidney Health New Zealand you can do so by following the link on our website - <https://www.kidney.health.nz/donations> . All donations are tax deductible so please ask for a receipt if you need one. Donations can be made anonymously if you choose to do so.

- Green Cross Health
- The Kingdom Foundation, proudly managed by Perpetual Guardian
 - WG Johnston Charitable Trust
 - R O Dixey Trust
 - Massey University
 - Vernon Hall Trust Fund
 - Havelock North School
 - Te Kowhai School
 - Hamilton Library
 - Palmerston North Library
 - Wellington Library
 - Havelock North Library
 - St Mary's College, Wellington
 - UCOL Masterton
 - Pak N Save Wainoni
 - DP Boocock Family Trust
 - Wintec
 - Genesis Energy
 - Stroke Foundation
 - REAP Centre Masterton
 - Stabicraft

