

Media Release

Wednesday 25 August 2021

Pasifika community must have vaccine priority

Pasifika families need to take priority for vaccination, given that Pasifika people make up 70 percent of cases of the current outbreak of the Covid-19 Delta variant in New Zealand, says Mr Kiki Maoate, a paediatric surgeon and Chair of the Pacific Medical Association.

The Pasifika Medical Association is a network of Pacific health professionals, working collaboratively to strengthen Pacific health workforce capacity and capability and meet the health needs of Pacific people in the region.

“Pasifika people and Māori are more likely to have underlying health conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular heart disease, which means that if they become infected with Covid-19 and are not vaccinated, the risks of them becoming seriously ill or even dying, are higher than those for most other people.

“The first dose will give you a good level of protection and this will be increased with the second dose. The best way for Pasifika people to keep safe is by getting vaccinated and doing it as a family so you are protecting each other.”

He urged anyone who had symptoms such as a cough, feeling hot and cold, or tiredness to get a Covid-19 test. “The best thing you can do for your loved ones is to get a test if you are not feeling well. A simple test can literally save lives.”

Mr Maoate also encouraged Pasifika cancer patients who are undergoing treatment or have surgery scheduled, to keep up the appointments. “Cancer treatments and operations are still going ahead during Level 4 lockdown so please turn up for your appointment, unless you have been told not to by the hospital. And if you are a bit scared about going to hospital because of the Covid outbreak, please know that the hospitals have all the systems in place to keep you safe.

On the other hand, patients who have had surgery delayed can be assured that it has been delayed because it is considered safe to delay.

Mr Maoate encouraged those families struggling with lockdown, especially those finding it difficult to afford food, to get help by calling 0800 890 110 or checking out the Pacific health website www.pacifichealth.org.nz

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