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Te Aho o Te Kahu releases Cancer Prevention Report today

Te Aho o Te Kahu, the Cancer Control Agency, is today - World Cancer Day - releasing Pūrongo Ārai Mate Pukupuku, the Cancer Prevention Report.

Cancer is the leading cause of health loss in Aotearoa New Zealand with about 25,000 people diagnosed every year.

With stronger prevention measures, up to half of cancers diagnosed every year could be avoided.

That is why Te Aho o Te Kahu has released a report highlighting where cancer prevention efforts can be strengthened. It aims to help shape policies that will prevent cancers, as well as other conditions for the people of Aotearoa.

“A cancer diagnosis can cause a huge amount of distress for the person diagnosed and their whānau. Given this, we want to make sure that wherever possible we reduce the number of people who ever have to set foot on a cancer journey,” chief executive of Te Aho o Te Kahu, Professor Diana Sarfati says.

“Te Aho o Te Kahu continues to work hard to make sure those affected by cancer receive the best possible care, but it is critical that we accelerate efforts that will decrease the likelihood of people getting cancer in the first place.”

The report focuses on six key areas: tobacco, alcohol, poor nutrition and excess body weight, insufficient physical activity, excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation and chronic infections.

“Our aim is to identify ways to create the environments that help whānau live long healthy lives, free of cancer,” Professor Sarfati says.

“We know environments heavily influence the decisions people make. Given this, we want environments that make the healthy choice, the easiest choice.”

Report lead and public health physician Dr Nisha Nair says Pūrongo Ārai Mate Pukupuku has a strong focus on equity.

“The cancers which are more common for Māori and Pacific peoples tend to be the cancers which are highly preventable.”

“If we are to really tackle cancer inequities, prevention is our most powerful tool.”

Te Aho o Te Kahu will continue to work with the Ministry of Health and wider sector to implement stronger cancer prevention measures in Aotearoa.

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