



Southland District
HEALTH BOARD
Te Poari Hauora o te Rohe o Murihiku

PRESS RELEASE

ATT: HEALTH REPORTERS / NEWS ROOM

Thursday 29 October 2009

"Quality and Humanity in Health"

One Primary Health Organisation across Otago and Southland Following a Special Meeting of Southland District Health Board

The South will now have one Primary Health Organisation across Otago and Southland after Southland District Health Board (DHB) today rescinded its previous decision to form a separate Southland PHO.

Southland DHB approved the formation of a single PHO across both regions, replacing the nine in existence now, at a Special Board meeting held in public session this morning.

The meeting was held following the board receiving further information after its 8 October meeting that rural General Practitioners (GPs) did not support the concept of a separate PHO for Southland and were unhappy with communication flow during the process.

Southland DHB Board Chairman Paul Menzies said it became apparent after attending a meeting of the Rural GP Network last week, as well as a prior South Link Health survey, that a significant majority of GP practice owners across Otago and Southland supported the concept of a single PHO across the two provinces.

"Our previous decision was based on the evidence we had at the time, however after our original motion further information came to light that made it imperative that we revisit the decision," Mr Menzies said.

"It is vital that any future structure for PHOs has general practice support and without their support the establishment of a single PHO for Southland could not proceed."

Following the board's decision today, Mr Menzies acknowledged the PHO issue had been a difficult process for both the board and the community and paid tribute to those involved in PHOs across Southland.

"We want to thank them for their many achievements," he said. They have suffered in this drawn out process with us, however it has been an exercise in democracy and the right decision has been made in the end."

The Otago Board had voted in the private section of its October board meeting for one single PHO across the two regions, but would have had to set up a separate single PHO in Otago by default. Now that both DHBs have approved to contract with only one PHO across both regions, they have also both agreed to the appointment of a PHO transitional board to oversee the creation of a single, community-owned, Otago-Southland PHO.

The boards will now issue notices of exit, for contracts the DHBs have with existing PHOs, across Otago Southland once a time-line has been set for the creation of the new cross-region PHO. The DHBs expect to appoint a PHO transitional board in the near future.

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