



October 28, 2022

Stroke Foundation's free blood pressure checks coming to the South Island

For immediate release

As part of the Stroke Foundation's annual Big Blood Pressure Check Road Trip, communities around the South Island can look forward to a visit from the Foundation's Health Promotion team, equipped to screen for high blood pressure and hypertension. Anyone is welcome to visit the mobile units and get a free check.

Up to one-fifth of New Zealanders have high blood pressure, which is a leading contributor to stroke. Some people can go years without knowing they're suffering from high blood pressure as it often has no symptoms.

"When we talk about strokes being avoidable, this is our primary concern," says Jo Lambert, Chief Executive of the Stroke Foundation. "High blood pressure can be controlled, but only if people know they have it, otherwise they carry the risk of stroke with them constantly."

Over the last decade, the Stroke Foundation has carried out over 100,000 free community blood pressure checks.

"Every time we visit a community, as many as 3% of the people we test are at high risk of stroke," says Jo.

A hypertensive crisis is when high blood pressure is so acute that someone is in critical danger of experiencing a stroke.

"In addition, as many as one-third of people we test have a high blood pressure readings and are unaware of the potential risk they are in for stroke," she added.

High blood pressure is more common in Māori and Pacific Islanders, with these population groups experiencing more strokes than other New Zealanders.

"Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for people to receive a free blood pressure check, and that is the whole idea behind the Road Trip," Jo concluded.

The Stroke Foundation's specially modified vans, which are sponsored by Ryman Healthcare, will be in the South Island for two weeks and, in partnership with Foodstuffs NZ, will be visiting selected PAK'nSAVE and New World supermarkets. Upcoming dates of sites are regularly updated here – www.stroke.org.nz/big-blood-pressure-check-vans

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

- While stroke is the leading cause of disability and the second-biggest single cause of death in New Zealand for all adults, indigenous, and ethnic minority groups are disproportionately impacted.
- Ultimately, 75% of all strokes are preventable and high blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke, that is modifiable.

PO Box 12482, Wellington 6144 | 1st Floor Thorndon Rise, 95 - 99 Molesworth St, Wellington 6011
(04) 472 8099 | Freephone 0800 STROKE (0800 78 76 53) | strokez@stroke.org.nz | www.stroke.org.nz
Charities Commission number CC49490

- According to the latest population statistics, there could be more than 1 million New Zealanders living with high blood pressure.
- Recent research estimates a third of people with high blood pressure, between 300,000 to 400,000 people, are unaware that they are at increased risk of stroke.
- Māori and Pacific adults are more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure than non-Māori and non-Pacific adults.
- Diets high in salt are a leading cause of high blood pressure, with New Zealanders estimated to eat double the recommended amount of salt in their daily diet. Other common causes of high blood pressure include being overweight, smoking, drinking too much alcohol, not exercising and diabetes.

Media enquiries:

The Stroke Foundation of New Zealand

Alan John Koshy, Media and Communications Advisor, alan.koshy@stroke.org.nz / 027 506 9822

About the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand

The Stroke Foundation is a national charity in New Zealand focused on the prevention of and recovery from stroke. For over 40 years we have actively promoted ways to avoid stroke and dedicated ourselves to working closely with stroke survivors across the country. The generosity of New Zealanders enables us to help thousands of stroke survivors every year; providing them with critical services to ensure the best possible outcomes – not just for themselves, but also their family/whānau and carers too. To find out more about the Stroke Foundation, go to www.stroke.org.nz