

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release



## **New Stop Smoking Service to benefit Auckland's Pacific communities**

**A new regional Stop Smoking Service has been launched to improve smoke-free numbers in Pacific, as well as Maori and pregnant communities. The Fono, Auckland's largest Pacific-owned and Pacific-led health provider, will drive the Pacific service for the Auckland & Waitemata DHB regions. It is in partnership with primary health organisation ProCare and Maori provider Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Limited.**

The Stop Smoking Service is available to anyone who is eligible for publicly-funded health services and who lives, works or plays in the Auckland & Waitemata DHB regions.

Dennis Baty, Chief Operating Officer at ProCare, says the service is designed to reach target communities.

“Māori and Pacific are greatly over-represented when it comes to death rates from smoking, so we'll be working hard to reach and support these priority groups, as well as pregnant women,” he says.

“As a primary health provider, The Fono is in an ideal position to identify those people who smoke, encourage them to quit and connect them with relevant services for support.”

Mr Baty says the programme provides choice for smokers to help them quit and stay smokefree.

“When we were developing the service, people who smoked told us what they wanted and what would help them quit. Choice is a key component of the programme, giving people the option of group-based sessions, which offer peer support and expert advice, or one-to-one coaching,” he says.

Tevita Funaki, Chief Executive of The Fono, says they are excited to be involved in a service aimed at helping Pacific people to quit smoking and live smokefree, adding The Fono is in a unique position to assist.

“Increasing access is a really important aspect for this service. For example, providing Pacific church-based sessions that support people to stop smoking, or a home-based coaching session where a mum wanting to quit doesn't have access to transport or childcare, will support people to be smokefree,” he says.

“In each case, the person undertaking the programme will be supported every step of the way by a qualified coach. The Fono is excited to be involved to improve the health outcomes of our communities with the addition of this community-based stop smoking service.”

**ENDS**

**For more information:**

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**ABOUT THE FONO**

The Fono provides affordable healthcare services including medical, dental, pharmacy, health awareness and community support services. We deliver a combination of these services across four Auckland locations. With combined experience of four separate clinics stretching over 75 years, The Fono aims to be a leader in health for the people who need it the most, fostering well, thriving, vibrant communities.

[www.thefono.org](http://www.thefono.org)