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Auckland DHB apologises for the events that led to the Cartwright Inquiry

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Auckland DHB apologises for the events that led to the Cartwright Inquiry

Thirty years ago this month, the Report of the Cervical Cancer Inquiry (the Cartwright Report) identified significant failures in the treatment of the precursor to cervical cancer (carcinoma in situ) at National Women's Hospital. At no stage has our District Health Board made a public apology for this failure in our ethics and service to our population. It is now time to remedy this wrong.

Monday 20 August 2018

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Judge Cartwright identified long-standing failures in the ethical values and practices used by clinicians who were conducting research at the hospital, operated by the Auckland Hospital Board (now the Auckland District Health Board).

One of the most profound errors was the failure to respect patient consent, to respect the right all patients have to make informed choices about their medical treatment.

On the occasion of this anniversary, as Chair of Auckland District Health Board, I formally apologise to the women whose lives were affected by these failures, which for many resulted in an early death.

These patients, including mothers, sisters, partners, daughters, friends and colleagues, whaea and tamahine, were failed by people they trusted to care for their health and wellbeing. We apologise to the women affected for these wrongs.

And to those who have been with them, their whānau, supporters and communities, we also apologise.

To learn from the mistakes of the past it is critical that we remember all aspects of our history, including this serious failure in our care.

I want to pay particular tribute to the 84 patients, relatives and supporters whose personal experiences informed the Cartwright Inquiry, and without whom these stories would not have been heard.

In many cases these voices are no longer with us, but their courageous testimony led to far-reaching reforms of patient welfare and rights.

We are deeply sorry for what they went through. We will not forget them.

Pat Snedden

Chair