

SECOND CHANCE

AT LEARNING

Dr Chivala Heal, MBChB

NGĀI TAHU

I'm Ngāi Tahu from Moeraki and grew up in Dunedin. I was twenty-seven when I applied for Otago Medical School, at the time I was working as a Health Protection Officer in the Public Health Unit in Christchurch. It was a colleague who suggested I apply for Medical School, a big step but one I've never regretted.

Being a Mature Student

I knew it would be a long hard road; six years of study, leaving a secure job, taking a chance that it might not work, lectures, tutorials and labs. So I looked at it as I do most things, logically. As an adult student I treated study like a job. I'd go to University from 8 until 5 and study in between classes.

The support networks at Otago are in my opinion outstanding, especially through the Māori Centre. They'd run tutorials and we'd get together working in study groups. I found being older than some of the other students, I had a different perspective. I always allowed time for myself to do things that I enjoyed outside of study, especially when spending time with my family.



Kia Ora Hauora

I was first approached by Kia Ora Hauora when I was working as a Health Protection Officer at the DHB in Christchurch.

I was a second year medical student when Kia Ora Hauora asked a few of us to mentor the 1st Years as they navigated study, university life, and curriculum. If people had travelled from far away, we'd provide support and a familiar face around campus. It's a programme that's been going for some time and one I was happy to be a part of.

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Re-entering the Workforce

Following graduation I applied for a job at Christchurch Hospital. My husband is in the Army based in Burnham so Christchurch Hospital was a natural choice. I enjoy the hospital environment, spending time with people and their families. Explaining procedure and what's happening to them, it's a very rewarding part of the job. Often the consultants and more senior members of the team are so time pressured they don't have time to explain things well.

Cultural Competency

I believe strongly that it's important that Māori become more involved in health. We need more representation to have cultural competency across the board. It's also about having familiar faces, creating a more comfortable environment for Māori and providing them with more equitable care in the hospital. People think that we're giving Māori special treatment but we're actually not. We're trying to get them the same health outcomes as everybody else.

Future Aspirations

At the moment, I'm in my second year of my two-year registration period. Once that's completed I get to choose a specialist area. For me, I'm interested in all the medical specialities like a cardiology that look after heart health, or respiratory problems. Both are equally important or I can be a general medicine physician and look after a whole range of things. My preferences are like 60% medical specialist and 40% GP.

Whatever I do settle on I'm happy that I chose medicine because despite the sacrifice and the hard-road I am contributing to my community and doing something I'm passionate about.