

THE MORE WE LEARN

THE MORE THERE IS TO LEARN

Dr Ben Wilkinson

MBChB

I was born in Taupō, but grew up in Nelson, Whakatū, a beautiful place at the top of the South Island. At school I wasn't the worst or best student but I enjoyed learning. I'm a Post-Graduate Year 1 (PGY-1) at Gisborne Hospital, Tairāwhiti.

Light bulb moment

When did you decide you wanted to become a Doctor? I came to health a little later. I started out studying jazz guitar for a year at the New Zealand School of Music. It gave me a bit of time to really sort out what I wanted to study and thanks to a few inspirational people in my whānau I decided on human physiology and health. So, in 2010 I began my studies in Health Sciences at Otago University.

Kia Ora Hauora support

Kia Ora Hauora are part of a growing network of services aiding Māori Health workforce development. A network that should remain of paramount priority for a country with socioeconomic inequities such as New Zealand. They

supported me through providing networking opportunities, mentoring, information around careers/scholarship, and education.

“ *Te reo Māori echoes down the hospital hallways* ”

What's the best part about your job?

I enjoy most aspects of my job, except when I have to do 14-hour days. Talking to patients, seeing people get better, interacting with other health professionals,

constant learning of new knowledge and hands on skills (the human body is an intricate machine - like most things - more we learn, more there is to learn).



How do we increase a qualified Māori health profession workforce?

By continuing to fund and develop Māori Health Workforce Development, aiming predominantly at those from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. The effect should become almost exponential as the workforce grows and these folks return to their communities and influence others. It's about breaking the cycle of poverty for families and communities - lifting people out of deprivation, inspiring, and educating Māori. They can become a scientist / doctor / lawyer / engineer / entrepreneur / teacher that they can, if they want to.

What advice would you give to Māori Students entering a Health Career Pathway?

It's normal to not know what you want to do when you leave school. Be inquisitive. Seek support and opportunity. Work hard. Don't forget to laugh. Try to keep your lifestyle balanced, knowledge is more than books.

Why choose Tairāwhiti and Hauora Tairāwhiti DHB?

Wikipedia told me that Gisborne has close to 50% Maori within the population which is unique to New Zealand. Te reo Māori echoes down the hospital hallways. The area offers great surfing, plenty of sunshine, carparks, cheap living, very nice people, and you get to flat at the beach. But there is work to be done here.