**A MESSAGE TO ALL CANTERBURY DHB STAFF & THE WIDER CANTERBURY HEALTH SYSTEM FROM DHB BOARD CHAIR SIR JOHN HANSEN**

At 11.59pm tonight the national COVID-19 alert level rises to Level 4 and a national lock-down. This is a very necessary move.  The Board is extremely conscious that many of you will be in the front line assessing and treating those suffering from illness due to COVID-19.

You are also in the front line of New Zealand’s fight to control, limit and eliminate the virus.

Together with Board members I want to assure you that the Canterbury DHB Board is standing alongside you as we respond to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been an extraordinary few years in our region, but a shining light throughout all the challenging times has been the enduring resilience of the Canterbury Health System.

This resilience can be attributed to every one of you – who continue to work tirelessly to keep the system running each day, just as you are now, planning and preparing for the anticipated arrival of large numbers of unwell people with COVID-19.

Whatever your role, you all play an important part in our response. As well as those doing the caring I know there are many more behind the scenes supporting the carers and ensuring they have everything they need, when they need it.  I want to thank you all for your unwavering commitment to caring for the Canterbury community through unprecedented times such as these.

Please be assured that the Board will make all necessary decisions in a timely manner to enable our health system to continue to function well and effectively manage the multiple challenges COVID-19 will present. Your health and wellbeing, and that of the entire Canterbury community, will be at the heart of all our decisions.

I wish you and your families well as we head into the uncharted territory of working during a national State of Emergency with a nationwide lock-down from later tonight.

I encourage you to make use of the wellbeing support available to you, and if there’s an opportunity to take a breather during the next four weeks in preparation for what’s to come, make the most of this unexpected window of opportunity to fine-tune our plans.

Kia kaha

Sir John Hansen

Canterbury DHB Board Chair