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By Admin | Sunday, November 27th, 2011

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Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand today signed a landmark agreement with Te Ohu Rata O Aotearoa (Te ORA) Māori Medical Practitioners Association of Aotearoa as part of its ongoing commitment to improve Indigenous health, and specifically Māori health equality in Aotearoa.

'This agreement is a joint commitment to work together to realise the potential of Māori medical students and to strengthen the capacity of non-Indigenous medical graduates to practice with cultural competence and confidence in Māori health settings,' said Professor Justin Beilby, the President of Medical Deans.

'It also gives us the capacity to jointly influence broader structural reform and policy and program agendas in both national health and education.'

Professor Beilby said the agreement built on a similar agreement with the Australian Indigenous Doctors association, initially struck in 2005 and renewed in 2008. Medical Deans is made up of the Deans of Australia's 18 university medical schools and the two New Zealand schools.

The agreement was signed at the opening of an international conference in Auckland, the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) Connection IV. The Conference brings together leading medical educators from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Hawaii and Vietnam.

'This collaboration formalises the Deans' commitment to Indigenous health and acknowledges the value and significance of Indigenous knowledge,' Professor Beilby said 'It is based on mutual respect and a commitment to joint decision making, constant learning and reflection.'

'This MOU signals the beginning of an important relationship and work program between Māori doctors and the Medical Deans,' said Dr Sue Crengle, the Chair of Te ORA. 'Te ORA looks forward to working with Medical Deans to support the future growth and development of the Māori medical workforce.'

The LIME Network conference, known as LIME Connection, is held every two years in either Australia or Aotearoa/New Zealand.

More information: <http://limenetwork.net.au/content/lime-connection-iv>

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