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Aerial delivery of health advice

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Bulls general practitioner Dr Dave Baldwin, known for his down-to-earth health promotion, has been in the news again, this time by arriving by helicopter for a pre-Christmas talk to inmates at Manawatu Prison.

The talk was well received by the inmates "and we had a lot of laughs in the process of demystifying health issues", he said.

"Fingers crossed, it will make some difference."

It was the first time a helicopter had landed in the prison and Dr Baldwin said many inmates were "keen for a ride".

Asked if there was any possibility of a similar event at other prisons around the country, including the one at Milburn, Dr Baldwin said the Manawatu prison manager would be letting "his mates" know he was available to do the same at their prisons if the opportunity arose.

He said he was keen to go into prisons to spread the health message to men because "it was a group of men who, whether inside jail or out in the community, wouldn't bother going to men's talks".

His prison talk included ageing, sexual health and education, mental illness, cancer and alcohol.

Dr Baldwin is no stranger to air travel.

His sub-specialty is aviation medicine and his work through the Bulls Flying Doctor Service includes undertaking medical checks on pilots in remote parts of the country.

He has been much in demand as a public speaker since the publication of his men's health book, *Healthy Bastards - A bloke's guide to being healthy*, earlier this year.

He had noted that "most real unhealthy bastards aren't interested in coming to health talks" so he had to "get off my big chuff and find them", hence the prison visit.

Dr Baldwin's health promotion approach sparked a controversy in November after Otago District Health Board member Judith Medlicott took exception to the use of his illustration of the complications of obesity reproduced in a board report about obesity management.

She said the illustration, which was later removed from the report, ridiculed fat people and was on a par with Nazi caricatures of Jews.

Dr Baldwin rejected the criticism, saying he had serious things to say about obesity and other topics, and used humour to help get that message across.

The illustrations were part of that and people viewing them needed to keep their sense of humour.

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