



Media Statement
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Investment in children's health will improve economy

The New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) is urging the new Government to develop a national cross-sector child poverty strategy.

College president, Dr Julia Peters, says this strategy should be embedded in legislation and should include comprehensive monitoring, measurable targets, increased investment in children, healthy and affordable housing, free, high quality maternity and child services, good quality nutrition in schools, and provision of high quality early childhood education.

"Poverty is an overwhelming and pervasive factor in preventable diseases, injuries, disability, and death for children in NZ, particularly Māori and Pacific children," Dr Peters said.

"While some gains have been made - for example, higher, fairer immunization rates and more affordable primary care - much more still needs to be done."

Dr Peters said the College's new Child Poverty and Health Policy Statement¹ supports the paper recently released by the Office of the Children's Commissioner entitled, 'Choose kids: Why investing in children benefits all New Zealanders'².

She says urgent investment will return real dividends for children and for our society as a whole.

"This is not only socially just, but it is a good investment in terms of the long-term returns on the health and wellbeing of the population.

"Child health and wellbeing is a key issue for New Zealand. There is mass recognition that NZ children compare poorly with other developed countries on a range of child health indicators."

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¹ NZCPHM Child Poverty and Health Policy Statement available at: <http://www.nzcphm.org.nz/policy-publications>

² Office of the Children's Commissioner paper, "Choose kids: Why investing in children benefits all New Zealanders", available at: <http://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Publications/Choose-Kids-Why-investing-in-children-benefits-all-New-Zealanders-OCC-2.pdf>