



Conclusion:

Better Health - Brighter Futures: Improving health outcomes for children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand

Hautapu Family

The ambitions of the Health and Disability System review are to be commended.

However at present, it is silent on how the system will be transformed for children and young people.

The government has widely acknowledged that children and young people's health is not as good as expected nor improving in a comparable manner to that occurring in other OECD countries.

The opportunity now exists to change this, and in doing so, increase the quality of childhoods for millions of New Zealand's children and young people. Concerningly there is no specific reference to the health of children and young people in the 2021 Health and Disability System Review.

The Children, Young People's Health and Disability Collective has identified the need to develop a comprehensive National Health Strategy for Children and Young People as part of the current health reforms if they are to deliver improved health outcomes for our children and young people.

The four pillars critical to improving health outcomes for children and young people that must be addressed in the National Health Strategy for Children and Young People are:

- I. The unacceptable inequities in health outcomes for children and young people urgently need to be eliminated.
- II. Family and whānau wellbeing must be central to the delivery of children's and young people's health services.
- III. All services provided must be appropriate for the developmental and cultural needs of children and young people.
- IV. Service design must include input from children and young people and their family and whānau.

Without strong leadership, the current limited focus from the health system on children and young people will continue. The last Health Strategy for Children and Young People was launched in 1998.¹¹

While health outcomes are included in the Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy,¹⁸ there is little impetus nor accountability within the health system itself for outcomes for children and young people. Indeed, concerningly there is no specific reference to the health of children and young people in the 2021 Health and Disability System Review.

Currently, there is no ability to readily quantify the percentage of health budgets spent on children and young people.¹⁹

We are committed to working with decision makers to support them in creating a health system that will deliver the health outcomes we all expect for our youngest citizens and are calling for three key actions:

- Immediate attention to the development of a comprehensive National Health Strategy for Children and Young People.
- A seat at the table for representatives of the Collective to work collaboratively with other agencies to design the strategy.
- Commitment to a fully funded model including government funding support to deliver the National Health Strategy for Children and Young People.




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