

Media Release

RACP: make whānau wellbeing the norm

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has called on New Zealand politicians to take urgent action to make whānau wellbeing the norm.

RACP New Zealand President Dr Jonathan Christiansen said the way a community is designed and supported has a major impact on the health and wellbeing of children.

“The social and environmental inequities that prevent people from maintaining good health and participating in society are persistent, systemic, avoidable, and inherently unjust,” said Dr Christiansen.

“We know children in the most deprived areas are three times more likely to be hospitalised for preventable illnesses than children in the least deprived areas.

“Children and young people in whānau experiencing poverty are also two to three times more likely to develop mental health conditions.

“We whole-heartedly endorse the Children’s Commissioner’s challenge to all parties to lift child poverty out of the political arena, establish a cross-party accord and commit as a country to reducing poverty.

“Ensuring whānau are supported to lead healthy lives by addressing the causes of poor health will lead to reduced costs for the health system and greater health equity,” Dr Christiansen said.

Paediatrician and RACP New Zealand President-Elect Dr Jeff Brown said a child health equity lens should be applied to all public policy development and assessment.

“Whichever political party or coalition ends up leading the next government, we want action to implement baseline policies that address the social and environmental factors affecting health outcomes for these kids now,” said Dr Brown.

“Children don’t choose their postcode.”

Paediatric Society of New Zealand President-Elect Dr Tim Jelleyman supports the RACP’s call for action.

“Giving infants the best start, children the greatest opportunity and youth the most positive prospects will be achieved by practically supporting whānau in their nurture of tamariki, our national treasure. We endorse this call to action,” said Dr Jelleyman.

To read the RACP’s full statement visit <https://www.racp.edu.au/fellows/resources/new-zealand-resources/new-zealand-election-statement-2017>

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of almost 2,000 physicians and paediatricians and close to 1,000 trainees in New Zealand.

The RACP trains physicians, often referred to as specialists, in more than 33 medical specialities

Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients. www.racp.edu.au

About the Paediatric Society of New Zealand (PSNZ): PSNZ is a multidisciplinary member organisation of over 500 professionals working to advocate for and promote the health of children and young people in New Zealand, consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

PSNZ believes all children and young people have the right to attain optimal physical, mental and social health and wellbeing. By working as a co-ordinated national network of health professionals the Society dedicates its efforts and resources to this end. <http://www.paediatrics.org.nz/>