



Media release:

**Public Health Association of New Zealand
Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand
New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine**

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Child Poverty Monitor 2016: poor progress

There are unacceptable levels of child poverty in New Zealand and not enough progress has been made to reduce the numbers says Warren Lindberg, CEO of the Public Health Association of New Zealand, in response to the release today of the Child Poverty Monitor 2016.

The Public Health Association, Health Promotion Forum and College of Public Health Medicine support calls by Children's Commissioner Andrew Becroft for an urgent plan of action to cut the numbers of children living in poverty.

The new report shows that thousands of kiwi children are experiencing hardship due to poverty. At a time when our economy is growing it is shocking to learn that 14% of children are living in material hardship while 8% (85,000) of children are experiencing severe material hardship, living in households where they miss out on 9 or more essential items.

It is not fair that so many children living in our country have to go without the things every child should have a right to: warm, safe, healthy homes; access to medical care; good quality education and access to healthy food.

Children should not have to live in cold and damp homes which we know lead to higher rates of infectious disease such as rheumatic fever. They should not have to live in a car or in overcrowded conditions where they find it hard to do their homework. It is not fair that kids should miss out on medical care because there is no way for them to get to the doctor, yet that was the case for an estimated 26,000 children in 2015, while in that same period 197,000 children had an unmet primary health care need due to poverty.

There are lifelong and intergenerational consequences for children living in severe and prolonged poverty. They will grow up with no expectation of a better life because they have never known anything but hardship and have not had even their basic needs met.

The PHA, Health Promotion Forum and College of Public Health Medicine urge the government to honour its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which it signed up to in 2015. SDG 1 is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere with a target of halving poverty by 2030. The rates of child poverty in New Zealand have stayed pretty much the same since 1994, which clearly indicates that a business as usual approach is not going to work. The PHA's Ceo, Warren Lindberg, commented today that, "We're pleased to note that the new Prime Minister has promised a Government that will ensure 'the benefits of growth are widely shared'."

This statement is endorsed by:

- Warren Lindberg, CEO of the Public Health Association of New Zealand
- Felicity Dumble, President Elect of the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine
- Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director of the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand

ENDS

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