



Media Release
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Government must set targets to reduce child poverty that set an expectation of equity

New Zealand needs a cross-party, whole of government strategy, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation, to address child poverty levels, which despite some recent improvement, are still unacceptable, the NZ College of Public Health Medicine says.

The College of Public Health Medicine commends the government on its commitment to reducing child poverty however it is calling for specific targets to reduce child poverty, which set an expectation of equity, and are supported by robust definitions and measures of child poverty, and a monitoring /reporting framework.

“A strategy should focus on poverty particularly in relation to Māori, Pasifika children and refugee children, and children with disabilities,” said College spokesperson, Dr Amanda D’Souza.

She said the government strategy should be embedded in legislation.

“It’s critical that a very transparent and robust monitoring and reporting framework is established so we can better measure and manage this issue, which affects so many thousands of Kiwi families and children.”

The Children’s Commissioner has just released figures showing that the growth in child poverty ‘has been halted’, however he says sustained progress is still needed.

The College of Public Health Medicine has recently released its revised [policy statement](#) on child poverty and health.

In this policy statement, the College also calls for the government to honour New Zealand’s commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG1 to end poverty in all its forms everywhere with a target of halving poverty by 2030.

The College also would like to see an investment approach to the income and tax benefit system as it relates to children. This should be applied to all low-income families with children, including welfare beneficiaries, so they have enough money to meet their children’s needs.

“The College remains concerned by the extent and entrenched nature of child poverty in New Zealand and, as health professionals with a major responsibility to advocate for health at all levels in society, we urge government to continue to act on evidence-informed policy that will have a measurable and positive impact.”

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The NZ College of Public Health Medicine has published a policy statement on Child Poverty and Health. The College’s policy statement is available at:
https://www.nzcpmh.org.nz/media/78172/2017_12_7_nzcpmh_child_poverty_and_health_reviewed_12_2017.pdf