



**RACISM IN HEALTH WILL CONTINUE IF TREATY REFERENCES  
REMOVED – PHA  
Embargoed to 12.15pm, Thursday 19 July**

References to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in legislation and policy are essential if Māori health is to be improved and racism in health addressed the Public Health Association (PHA) today told the Justice and Electoral Committee. The Committee is considering the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Deletion Bill.

PHA Director Dr Gay Keating said references to Treaty principles should be retained, unless they were replaced by more direct references to the content of the Treaty.

“The health of Māori is worse than other New Zealanders at all levels of income and education. The gap between Māori and other New Zealanders in life expectancy, for example, is echoed by the gap in service provision to Māori. One stark example is the way that Māori have been receiving fewer elective surgical operations than other New Zealanders. This systematic discrimination against Māori is racism.

“The progress that has been made in providing services that better meet the needs of Māori is strongly linked to the obligations in the Treaty. These obligations are highlighted by references to the Treaty in policies and legislation.

“Increasing awareness of Article Two in which Māori were guaranteed te tino rangatiratanga over their lands and their property and treasures has led to a significant increase in health services operated by Māori.

“While the development of Māori owned and operated health services is in line with Māori chieftainship over villages, property and treasures it has also had a significant impact on improving Māori health. Māori control over health services to Māori is more effective at improving the health of Māori than previous services.

“The increasing awareness of Article Three has led to greater efforts to reduce health inequalities, with the goal of ensuring Māori enjoy the same rights as others.

“We must continue to enshrine our obligations to Māori – as set out in the Treaty – in policy and legislation. Otherwise, out of sight could well be out of mind.”

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