

**New book highlights benefits of keeping people well  
- Public Health Association**

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A new book on health promotion shows that keeping people healthy is the best way to reduce demand on hospitals, says the Public Health Association (PHA).

*Reviews of Health Promotion Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand 2007–2008*<sup>1</sup> looks at a number of health promotion programmes, including Green Prescription, ALAC's campaign to address binge drinking, and the smokefree cars campaign. The book's contributors and editors are from the University of Otago.

PHA National Executive Officer, Dr Gay Keating, says the book shows the huge potential of health promotion to reduce demands on health care services.

"There is currently a big focus on reducing waiting lists – but the best way to do this is to stop people getting so sick that they do not need hospital treatment in the first place.

"This book looks at programmes that encourage people to be more physically active, eat healthy food, be safe in the sun, use alcohol responsibly, reduce tooth decay, and avoid exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

"The reviews have found that many of these programmes have been successful in encouraging people to make changes so they live a healthier life.

Dr Keating says supporting people to be healthy greatly reduces their risk of illness.

"About one-in-five hospital beds is taken up with someone whose illness could have been prevented. Every preventable admission means someone else goes further down the waiting list."

She says that prevention is by far the best use of the health dollar.

"We need to ensure there continues to be funding for the types of health promotion programmes outlined in this book. If we cut funding to these programmes, we'll see the waiting lists continue to grow as more people need hospital treatment for illnesses that could have been prevented."

**For further information**

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<sup>1</sup> Signal, L., Egan, R., and Cook, L. (Eds.). (2009). *Reviews of Health Promotion Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand 2007–2008*. Auckland: Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand and Health Promotion and Policy Research Unit, University of Otago.