

**PHA welcomes renewed focus on quality as a way to
reduce health inequalities
17 August 2009**

The Public Health Association (PHA) is welcoming the Ministerial Review Group's recommendation that developing more integrated models of health care should help reduce inequalities between various groups.

As the group's report indicates, despite reducing inequalities being an important feature of health policy for almost 20 years, too many groups still have less than ideal access to health services, and poorer health as a result.

The national executive officer of the PHA, Dr Gay Keating, says an effective approach to reducing inequalities and improving health is long overdue.

"A clear focus on quality and getting the right doctors and nurses talking with each other is essential."

She says it is also pleasing that the report recommends a sharper focus on PHOs and DHBs keeping people well in the first place.

"The PHA is calling on the Minister of Health to immediately reinstate reducing avoidable hospital admissions as a formal target of the health sector.

"We need to keep people well in the first place, so they do not need hospital care. If we can keep people well and not needing to go to hospital in crisis, this will free up hospital beds for more waiting list surgery.

"Keeping people healthy is a win-win situation. No-one likes being sick and as any health economist will tell you, hospitals are where the bulk of hard-earned taxpayers' money goes."

For further information

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