

## New Zealand must take more responsibility for all its children: PHA

**Public Health Association media release, 13 December 2010**

The Public Health Association (PHA) says the findings of the *Children's Social Health Monitor*, released today, shows New Zealand must take more responsibility for its children's wellbeing.

"It's scary how sick children are getting, particularly those who live in houses where there isn't enough money to sustain basic health," says the PHA's National Executive Officer, Dr Gay Keating.

"Health begins where people live, learn, work and play. The *Children's Social Health Monitor* shows that for too many children the situations in which they live and learn are pushing them into illness, crippling some for life and cutting short the lives of others."

One focus of the *Children's Social Health Monitor* was the children who end up in hospital with medical conditions that should easily be prevented – or treated early – in a country like New Zealand.

"A wise country will ensure that all children reach their potential, because socially and economically, we need every child to become the best adult they can. The World Health Organization reminds us that getting it right for children is the basis of a robust society. Very recently UNICEF warned rich countries such as New Zealand that we all lose out when some of our children are left too far behind.

"We need to all take responsibility to make sure that our children have the benefits of a dry house and enough food to eat, a warm coat in winter and shoes. As a society we need to be sufficiently broadminded to ensure these conditions exist for all our children, even if their parents can't work because they are ill or disabled or are unemployed.

"If we don't care about all our children now, we will all pay dearly in the future."

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