

Report shows investment in early childhood critical – PHA

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The Public Health Association (PHA) has welcomed the report released today by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman, saying it forms the basis for an honest review of possible welfare reforms.

PHA National Executive Officer Dr Gay Keating said the report, *Improving the Transition*, shows beyond doubt how critical early childhood is in determining what happens in later life.

“Sir Peter is quite explicit about the fact that early interventions reap long-term rewards that far outweigh any short term costs, particularly for children from low-income or disadvantaged homes.

“Unfortunately, the report is also clear we are not doing anywhere near enough, and that many of the programmes we do have in place are based on narrow-minded political ideology rather than on good evidence about what works.”

Dr Keating said the advice of the Welfare Working Group being considered by the government should be measured against the evidence in Sir Peter's report

“Welfare reform is a hot topic, and something that hugely affects children. Any changes need to be evidence-based and fair, rather than what some parties think might win them votes,” Dr Keating said.

The PHA is calling on all parties to get behind programmes we know will work so they can continue no matter who is in government.

“Improving the lot for all our children is a long-term project, so we need our political parties to honestly do the right thing.

“Not only are our children worth investing in for their own sakes, but responsible programmes for young New Zealanders also make good fiscal and economic sense.”

For more information contact:

Dr Gay Keating, PHA National Executive Officer 473 5524, 021 868 608