



NZMA MANIFESTO 2020

Policies to improve health

Good health policy
is

People-centred:

*Move the focus of care from
the system to the person*

Good health policy
must support

Equity:

*Fair and equal opportunity
for all to have
good health*

Good health policy
must ensure

Good care:

*Quality care, based on
evidence and ethics*

Good health is a major resource for social, economic and personal development and is an important dimension of quality of life.

Sound health policies and systems are fundamental to the individual and collective wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Doctors play a vital role in improving health and the quality of health care. The NZMA, the national body representing doctors in all branches of medicine, calls on political parties to commit to policies that support and improve health.

Health investment priorities

1



- Invest in **public health measures** including health promotion, control and prevention of disease, and effective health services.
- Ensure **inter-sectoral and whole-of-government approaches** to addressing the upstream social, economic and environmental determinants of health, including effective regulation.
- Invest to **reduce the number of barriers** vulnerable and high-need patients meet when trying to access the care they need.
- **Invest resources** in those with the highest need and those least able to pay.
- Invest in **mental health initiatives**.
- Invest in **primary healthcare** to ensure the sustainability of general practice.
- Ensure **equity is at the forefront** of innovations such as e-health.

General practice sustainability

2



General Practice is the cornerstone of successful primary healthcare, which underpins population health outcomes and is key to ensuring we have a high-quality, equitable, and sustainable health system.

- GPs should be at the centre of the health care system, helping people maintain healthy lives, preventing disease, treating acute illness, and caring for people with chronic disease.
- Recognise the efficient, cost-effective and quality care that General Practice Provides in New Zealand.
- Urgently undertake the long-promised review of Primary Healthcare.
- Increase resourcing to frontline General Practice.
- Refine models of service delivery that recognise the importance of GPs as generalists and nurture the value of the GP-patient interaction.

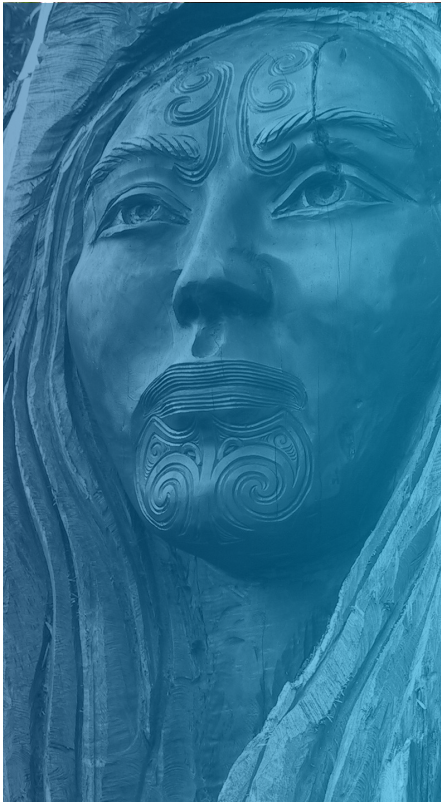


Public health is about promoting health and preventing disease through organised efforts at a society level. The Government can influence a large number of factors that affect the health of New Zealanders.

- Establish a **central public health authority** with the power to lead and co-ordinate public health initiatives across the country.
- Incorporate **health impact analyses** as part of the legislative process and as part of a health in all policies approach.
- **Reduce alcohol-related harm.** Introduce specific health targets to address harmful drinking. Expand treatment services across the country. Phase out alcohol marketing and sponsorship. Raise excise taxation and consider minimum pricing. Lift the minimum purchase age to 20 years.
- **Combat obesity.** Protect children from marketing of unhealthy food. Implement a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. Implement a consistent, easy-to-use food labelling system. Include nutrition as part of the school curriculum.
- Establish a **tobacco control strategy** and action plan to achieve Smokefree 2025 and closely review the effectiveness of regulation of e-cigarettes.

Māori health and health equity

4



- Commit to a multi-faceted approach to **address inequities in Māori**. This should address upstream social and other determinants of health and include improved prevention, diagnosis and management of illness.
- Establish the **Māori Health Authority** and empower it by giving it powers to make decisions on where funding is invested.
- **Improve health literacy**. Limited health literacy is associated with high health system costs. Addressing health literacy needs improves health behaviours and outcomes. Embed health literacy principles into health and education.
- **Strengthen regulation** to provide healthier environments.

Climate change and planetary health

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Climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. Yet well planned and effective measures to mitigate climate change can have substantial health (and health equity) co-benefits.

Planetary health has been defined as “the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends”. A holistic effort to reorient human systems to achieve better human and planetary health is our most important and urgent challenge.

- Commit to **environmental health impact assessments** for all major policies.
- Policies that help make a rapid, whole-of-society-transition to a **low greenhouse gas (GHG)** emitting nation.
- **Health co-benefits of measures to mitigate climate change** (as well as health costs associated with inaction) need to be factored into all climate policy.

Contact us

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