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JANUARY 12, 2007

## Cancer care under-resourced in NZ

Cancer treatment in New Zealand is woefully under-resourced and it desperately needs re-prioritising in government health policy, the Cancer Society said today.

One in three New Zealanders get cancer at some point and one in four die of it.

"Cancer is one of our biggest health threats, but it does not receive the resourcing it warrants or needs," Cancer Society chief executive, Dalton Kelly, said.

The radiation therapists' ongoing pay dispute is just the tip of the iceberg, he said.

"Our feedback indicates the whole cancer workforce is hurting, from cancer nurses and Maori health workers, to pathologists and oncologists.

"It's not just a money issue - people working in this field do not feel valued and respected for the tremendously important and difficult work they do.

"This relates directly to how cancer treatment and support is prioritised in health policy and, in turn, how the area is funded and resourced."

Mr Kelly said New Zealand is not equipped to provide modern, holistic and appropriate cancer care given the increasing demands of a greater number of patients each year, the increasing complexity of treatment and the growing focus on the rights of the family to receive the best back-up information and support services.

"You just have to look at treatment waiting lists and cancer equipment and new drug wish lists to see we are behind the eight ball and falling further behind each year."

Mr Kelly said the government has a 'good roadmap' in the cancer control strategy, "but there's no incentive to make the journey".

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