



Cancer Society of New Zealand
National Office

Te Rōpū Mate
Pukupuku o Aotearoa

Level 6
Wakefield House
90 The Terrace
PO Box 10847
Wellington

Telephone: 64 4 494-7270
Facsimile: 64 4 494-7271

Websites: www.cancernz.org.nz
www.daffodilday.org.nz
Email: admin@cancer.org.nz

MEDIA RELEASE
2 February 2007

CANCER: FATE OR PREVENTABLE?

Is getting cancer just the luck of the draw?

Many Kiwis believe that cancer is fate – something that happens to them if they are unlucky; something over which they have no control.

But Dalton Kelly, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Cancer Society says in fact, more than one-third of cancers worldwide – almost four million cases - each year could be prevented if people acted on what they know and apply that knowledge in their daily behaviour.

February 4 is World Cancer Day, a day on which cancer organisations globally promote a theme relating to cancer. This year's message is: "Today's children; tomorrow's world".

"The key issue is that simple changes in lifestyles can be taken to reduce cancer risk," Mr Kelly says. "Tobacco use, diet, nutrition and exercise, sun safety and vaccination against cancer-causing viruses all play a role in influencing cancer risk."

Mr Kelly says the aim of the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) campaign is to scale up awareness of what people can do to prevent cancer and change people's behaviour.

"Healthy habits established early in life have a significant impact in later years. Behaviour is already formed before adolescence – I'm sure most of us can identify bad habits we developed in our younger years that are hard to quit," Mr Kelly says.

"The environment in which children grow up – at home, in school and in the community – powerfully influences their behaviour later whether this regards tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke, diet and physical activity, or smart behaviour in the sun."

The Cancer Society believes parents have a key role in influencing healthy habits in their children.

"We need to help parents to understand the long-term benefits of a healthy lifestyle and engage them as partners in cancer preventing activities that start early in life. I can't imagine

any parent not wanting to help their children avoid a devastating, and in many cases preventable, disease.”

The four key messages the UICC and the Cancer Society are promoting for World Cancer Day are:

1. provide a smokefree environment for children
2. encourage an energy-balanced lifestyle (regular physical activity and low fat diet; avoid obesity)
3. learn the facts about vaccinations (HBV & HPV)
4. teach children to be sunsmart

Mr Kelly says the Cancer Society of New Zealand is actively working in the areas of tobacco control, skin cancer control, and risk reduction through encouraging physical activity and healthy nutrition.

“Our main community event that supports World Cancer Day is our Relay for Life which is held in 15 cities throughout New Zealand in February and March as a celebration of remembrance hope and thanks,” Mr Kelly says.

“This unique, challenging and fun event raises money for cancer research, prevention, early detection and patient services and encourages risk reducing physical activity.”

For more information:

***Dalton Kelly
Chief Executive
Cancer society of New Zealand
Tel 04 494-7270
Mobile 027 231 0067***