



**Cancer Society of New Zealand
Te Rōpū Mate Pukupuku o Aotearoa**

National Office
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

31st October 2007

Wake Up Call for Child Cancer Treatment

"Like every New Zealander I am shocked by the news that funding for child cancer is so inadequate. It's no wonder District Health Boards run up massive debt when such a basic service is woefully underfunded," the Chief Executive of the Cancer Society Dalton Kelly, said today.

News that funding by the Ministry of Health for child cancer services mainly reflects 'secondary' procedures, and does not adequately compensate tertiary care comes on the heels of the Cancer Society's repeated insistence that cancer treatment in New Zealand is hugely under-resourced and desperately needing reprioritizing in government health policy.

"It's great that we have a Cancer Control Strategy with an action plan to support it, but we don't have a single organisation or entity with the responsibility and the resources for actually delivering on that plan.

"Despite the Government's 'stated' priority objective of reducing the incidence and impact of cancer, its failure to provide any particular body with the responsibility to lead, coordinate and drive the action plan means that very little has, in reality, been achieved.

"Translated into patient care realities, this means children with cancer being passed from hospital to hospital in different regions for care, women with breast cancer being sent to Australia for radiation treatment, while other women are being treated with a truncated, unproven course of Herceptin.

"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.

"Cancer is one of our biggest health threats, but it does not receive the resourcing it warrants or needs. 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 concluded.

The Cancer Society of New Zealand is the leading charity dedicated to reducing the incidence of cancer and ensuring the best cancer care for everyone in New Zealand.

- Ends -

Media enquiries

Lynne St.Clair-Chapman, National Communications Manager
(04) 494 7195 / Mob: 027 4444 150,

Dalton Kelly, Chief Executive
04 494 7273 / Mob 027 231 0067