

Green's health research policies

Social media release

16th September 2020

New Zealanders for Health Research (NZHR) has written to all current parliamentary parties, as set out below, pointing out both the current level of government underinvestment in health research and the absence of any recommendations in the Health and Disability System Report for embedding health research as an essential component of the health system. The Green Party's response, received today, is as follows:

“On behalf of the Hon. Julie Anne Genter, Green Party spokesperson for Health, please find a response to your request.

Increasing government investment in health research:

The Green Party supports increased investment in health research. In particular, we'd like to see research investment directed toward Māori and Pacifica health issues to address the continuing disparities in the standards of health between different ethnic groups in Aotearoa. Additional funding for research into the changed pattern of health and disease associated with climate change will also be important in assisting low income and other vulnerable sectors of society.

Including health research within the health system as a key enabler of improved health outcomes:

COVID-19 has shown us that strong health services are critical. We believe health care must be available at the earliest stage possible to ensure the best possible health outcomes, quality of life and cost effectiveness. Decisions about health services should be based on the strongest possible evidence. To achieve this, the Green Party supports quality health research being included in the health system to optimise and improve health outcomes.

More information can be found here: https://www.greens.org.nz/health_policy

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On 10th September, following the postponement of the 2020 General Election until October 17th, NZHR re-wrote to all current parliamentary parties stating that we believe that it's time for health research to be an election issue, and seeking to ascertain each party's health research policies on:

1. Increasing government investment in health research
2. Including health research within the health system as a key enabler of improved health outcomes

The text of the remainder of our email was as follows:

“In late May of this year we carried out the fifth in our series of annual public opinion polls, ascertaining the importance that the voting public places on health research. This year’s poll was undertaken by Kantar, was based on a representative sample of 1000 respondents, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.1%.

Three quarters said that the government should invest more funding in health research, 79% said that health research investment should be a government priority and 35% said that they would be more likely to vote for a party which promised to increase the government’s health research budget.

The government’s 2020 health research allocation is a meagre 0.76% of health care costs - less in percentage terms than the 2019 allocation - and falling. Furthermore, the Health and Disability System Review report makes no recommendations that would embed health research as an essential component of health service delivery, despite the fact that 12,000 New Zealanders per year are dying prematurely.

NZHR maintains that to serve kiwis well, and for New Zealand to be pulling its weight internationally, government investment in health research should as a minimum stand at 2.4% of government health care costs, and that this should be achieved by 2027 which is the time frame for implementation of the government’s Health Research Strategy.

In the lead up to the 2020 election NZHR is letting voters know why we think that New Zealand’s “health research system fails the team of 5 million”, together with political parties’ policy positions so that they can make informed voting decisions. A copy of our recent media release is attached ([here](#)) for your information and the link to the headline version of the 2020 poll results is [here](#) , noting that we’ve already provided you with a hard copy of the full poll report.

We’re intending that our campaigning to the voting public will commence in the week commencing 21st September, so would be grateful if your reply could be sent to us by close of business **Friday 18th September.**”

NZHR advocates for increased investment in health research. It is an alliance chaired by Graham Malaghan, of the Wellington-based Malaghan Institute of Medical Research and supported by universities, clinical research organisations, and organisations representing both the philanthropic and pharmaceutical industry sectors. For more information visit <https://www.nz4healthresearch.org.nz/>

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