

Tēnā koutou

Re: Changes to the National Metabolic Service

[The Paediatric Society of New Zealand](#) and its members are deeply concerned about the proposed changes to the funding of the National Public Health Service. While we support the inclusion of the Antenatal and Childhood Screening Programme with the other screening programs, we understand that the review of this service recommends substantial funding cuts to the Antenatal and Childhood Screening Team, resulting in significant staffing reductions.

We strongly support the feedback provided by the National Metabolic Service, which highlights the potential impact these changes could have on the continued success of our world-leading screening programme.

These proposed changes will have far-reaching consequences for our members and the wider paediatric medical community. The screening programme plays a crucial role in detecting a wide range of serious diseases at an early stage, significantly reducing costly and preventable morbidity and mortality. It is our members are on the front line managing these conditions. Any reduction in the programme's efficiency will not only compromise the health and wellbeing of pēpi, tamariki, and whānau but will also increase the workload and challenges faced by paediatric healthcare professionals.

The screening programme was developed to prevent the devastating effects of serious diseases—an outcome that alone justifies its importance. Additionally, it delivers considerable cost savings by prioritising prevention over treatment, which is far more economical. Any reduction in its efficiency would render any perceived cost savings meaningless.

Similarly, for hearing and antenatal Down syndrome screening programs, maintaining and developing all three screening programmes requires a team effort linked with health experts.

In light of these factors, we strongly believe that downgrading this vital service is unjustifiable from both a health and economic perspective.

Ngā mihi nui,

Associate Professor Nicola Austin, Chair of NZCYCN Governance Group, Neonatal Paediatrician

Dr Owen Sinclair, President of PSNZ and Consultant Paediatrician

On behalf of the PSNZ Executive Team

“Tamariki in Aotearoa flourish in health and wellness”