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Kia Ora

**Subject: Q&A with Dr David Clark, Minister of Health**

It's is pleasing to know Dr David Clark will be appearing on your Q&A programme.

I am contacting you in my capacity as Chief Executive of Lung Foundation NZ, and on behalf of 2037 patients and their whanau who are currently dealing with a lung cancer diagnosis. (I am also a carer and supporter for cancer patient).

Lung cancer is New Zealand's biggest cancer killer; five people every day die of lung cancer and a further six are diagnosed with this devastating disease.

Lung cancer patients and carers were initially encouraged by the Ministers statement "Fighting cancer and achieving better access is a high priority"...

However, since the election, the silence has been deafening... many lung cancer patients and carers have become extremely frustrated and stressed (and patients continue to die prematurely).

- No details yet about the cancer agency that was promised to provide world class cancer care and the swifter process for funding new innovative treatments like targeted therapies and immunotherapy that are the standard of care abroad for lung cancer.
- No details yet about how much more funding is going to be directed into clearing the backlog of medicines on the waiting list that has resulted from years of under investment (\$682 million dollar hole.....).
- No details yet about a review of Pharmac. Funding treatments should be prioritised according to the burden of disease, (not according to a population based model which causes inequity), as this approach will not only save more lives, but save costs downstream in the health system...
- No commitment to direct the increased tax take from tobacco taxes into funding, early detection programmes and more effective treatments for the chronic and serious illnesses that are the result of smoking. Currently the government directs just 3% (\$62 million) into tobacco control and smoking cessation programmes from the \$1.9 billion dollars it receives.



## Conclusion

It would be great if one or more of the above questions are asked of Minister Clark.

Naku noa na

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Visit our website resources online [www.lungfoundation.org.nz](http://www.lungfoundation.org.nz)

## Attachments:

1. About Lung Foundation New Zealand
2. Lung Cancer in New Zealand



### **About Lung Foundation New Zealand**

Lung Foundation New Zealand was established in 2015 and it is a non-government organisation dedicated to promoting healthy lungs and early detection of lung disease (with a strategic focus on lung cancer, NZ's biggest cancer killer).

The Lung Foundation is devoted to supporting people affected by lung disease and provides an authentic voice for patients and their families.

Lung Foundation New Zealand advocates on a range of issues, including; a government commitment to early detection (includes screening), public access to more effective treatments, an increase in research funding and a restated commitment (and increased investment) to making Aotearoa a Smokefree nation by 2025.

*Lung cancer is not only the biggest cancer killer in New Zealand, it also represents a huge number of avoidable deaths every year. **Lung Foundation New Zealand requests the Government to confirm lung cancer is a Government Health Priority.***

### **Our Vision**

That New Zealanders will know how to keep their lungs healthy and they investigate symptoms of lung disease earlier in response to our advocacy.

### **Our Mission**

To ensure lung health is a priority for all New Zealanders.

### **Our Primary Goals**

- Promote Lung Health
- Promote Early Diagnosis of Lung Disease (Strategic focus on lung cancer)
- Reduce Lung Cancer Deaths (Strategic focus area)

### **Advocacy**

Lung Foundation New Zealand provides a voice for patients through advocacy by highlighting the inequalities that exist for lung cancer patients and their families;

- Boosting awareness of lung cancer and addressing the stigma that is wrongly associated with lung cancer.
- Early detection of lung disease and improving access for lung cancer patients to more effective treatments (including access to clinical trials).
- Improving access to psychosocial support for lung cancer patients throughout their journey and facilitating peer support.
- Increase in research dedicated to lung cancer

***We advocate for a common sense approach to funding treatments according to the burden of disease; Lung cancer should be regarded as a treatable chronic disease, managed with the right treatment at the right time.***



### **Lung Cancer in New Zealand**

- Every year in New Zealand, more people die of lung cancer, than of breast cancer, prostate cancer and melanoma combined.
- Lung cancer is New Zealand's biggest cancer killer. Everyday 5 kiwis die of lung cancer and another 6 are diagnosed with lung cancer.
- Ministry of Health reports that 2037 people were diagnosed with lung cancer in 2013 and 1656 people died of lung cancer.
- A Ministry report also shows:
  - Lung cancer was the most common cause of cancer death in 2012 for males aged 45-64 years
  - Lung cancer was the most common cause of cancer death in 2012 for both men and women aged 65-74 years
- Lung cancer does not discriminate - even healthy people can develop lung cancer. In fact 1 in 5 patients have never smoked and just 30% of patients diagnosed with lung cancer currently smoke.
- Lung cancer is a major cause of disparity of health outcomes between Maori and non-Maori. Lung cancer registrations and mortality rates in 2013 are four times higher in Maori women and nearly three times higher in Maori men.

#### Ministry of Health 2013 report on cancer registrations

421 Maori were diagnosed with lung cancer - 8 per week (3 times the general population).

86 Pacific Islanders were diagnosed with lung cancer - 7 per month (almost 1.5 times the general population).

82 Asians were diagnosed with lung cancer - 7 per month (less than the general population).

2037 people in total were diagnosed with lung cancer (40 people per week - 6 everyday).

#### Ministry of Health 2013 report on lung cancer deaths

299 Maori died from lung cancer - 25 per month (almost three times the general population).

73 Pacific Islanders died of lung cancer - 6 per month.

52 Asians died from lung cancer - 4 per month (half the general population).

1656 people died of lung cancer - 5 people every day.

- Smoking is a major risk factor for lung cancer (although it is NOT the only risk). Knowing there are 600,000 kiwis smoking every day, it is essential more resources are directed into smoking cessation programmes to support all people to quit, including more targeted programmes to address what is a very serious and complex addiction.

### **Lung Cancer Patient Resources**

Members of LFNZ's Special Advisory Committee have developed a number of lung cancer patient resources to empower patients and carers and help them make informed treatment decisions.

<http://lungfoundation.org.nz/resources>

### **Lung Health Promotion - our key messages**

1. Lung disease can affect anyone.
2. See a doctor if you have a persistent cough, shortness of breath, chest pains or noisy breathing.
3. Lung disease can be treated. The earlier you start treatment the better.
4. Look after your lungs. Be active and don't smoke



Including the above four key messages with a campaign will help save lives by improving early detection...

<http://lungfoundation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/C004193-LFNZ-A4-Poster-v52034.pdf>

**Lung cancer** - enclosed is a Q&A video with lung cancer patient survivor, Assoc. Prof. John Ashton which serves to highlight the symptoms of lung cancer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec3fk4OCau4>

Ends.