

HEALTH: MENTAL HEALTH

Building Better Public Services



Supporting mental health

Good mental health is vital for a healthy life. National understands that thousands of people and their families live with the daily burden of mental illness.

We have improved access to services through family doctors to help people cope with conditions such as depression. We have improved alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services.

National will continue supporting better mental health services for New Zealanders and their families.

Improving access to mental health services

In the 2011 Budget, the National-led Government committed an extra \$160 million over the next four years to improve mental health services.

National is placing more emphasis on youth, alcohol treatment, and better access to mental health services.

GPs can now offer extended consultations, and there is more and improved support available, including more counseling and other psychological interventions.

Many offenders have mental health problems. The health service is working closely with the Courts and the Corrections Department to reduce re-offending through better mental health services and support.

“National will provide \$33 million over four years to expand specialist mental health services for young offenders to increase early intervention and help reduce reoffending. We’ll improve early intervention for drug and alcohol treatment, and develop the Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project.”

Key points

- Providing \$160 million over the next four years to improve mental health services and deliver them more effectively.
- 60 new beds in a methamphetamine residential treatment programme in Auckland. 270 patients treated so far.
- Dedicated eating disorder facilities in Auckland so young people and their families don’t have to go to Australia for treatment.
- Mental health nursing staff added to National’s Voluntary Bonding Scheme.
- Established the Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project.
- Improving AOD treatment services for young people.

National has...

Improved early intervention

- ✓ Doubled funding for the National Depression Initiative to \$5 million.
- ✓ Improved AOD treatment services for young people, including funding 10 Community Specialist Youth Alcohol and Other Drug full time staff positions.
- ✓ Provided \$1.75 million for a new computer-based tool for adults to use at home to help them work through moderate mental health issues and substance abuse problems.

Supported youth living with mental illness

- ✓ Provided \$2 million to help 5,000 families address children's behavioural, emotional, and mental health problems.
- ✓ Established the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project to look at ways of addressing mental health issues.
- ✓ Provided \$6.5 million for five new dedicated eating disorder beds at Starship Hospital and a new nine-bed residential service in Auckland.

Provided better access to more services

- ✓ Provided extra resources and support for early intervention in mental health services.

More electronic support

- Visits to www.depression.org.nz – a website that encourages people to seek help – have doubled.
- 96 per cent of GPs have access to electronic support tools to help them better assess depression, manage patients, and make referrals.

What we will do next...

I. Provide better support for youth

- ➔ Invest \$33 million over four years in the development of youth specialist services.

This policy has been announced by the National-led Government. National will implement it if re-elected to government.

Many young offenders have underlying mental health problems. Better coordination between the courts and mental health services will increase early intervention and help address mental health and AOD issues, while reducing re-offending rates.

We will assign court liaison clinicians to all 63 Youth Courts, provide dedicated youth forensic services in the regions, and secure forensic youth beds.

Forensic beds will provide secure treatment for youth offenders.

This will be funded from the Mental Health Allocation in Budget 2011.

- ➔ Invest \$2 million a year to deliver nationally-consistent, enhanced, alcohol and other drug treatment services for youth.

Too many young people and their families are waiting too long to access specialised addiction services. Our additional investment is expected to reach an extra 2000 young people and reduce the waiting time between referral and treatment.

National will shorten waiting times to three weeks for children and youth referrals (0-19 years) to Mental Health and Addiction Services. Urgent cases will be seen even faster.

- Roll out brief intervention on alcohol use by participating GPs and Emergency Departments.

Research shows that a conversation, however brief, between a doctor and a patient can affect alcohol-related behaviour.

A project by ALAC and Whanganui PHO screened 43 per cent of patients about their alcohol use. Of that group, 36 per cent had brief conversations with their doctor, or were referred to a specialist AOD service. This sort of intervention can be very effective.

The two initiatives above will be part-funded out of the \$10 million Drivers of Crime programme already announced and from DHB mental health budgets.

2. Better invest where it's needed most

- Provide more resources to deliver better services to people with mental health issues, and focus on earlier intervention.

National has provided extra resources and help for patients through primary care clinics.

We now spend \$23.7 million a year for increased access to primary mental health services for people with mild to moderate needs.

We will continue to support people living with mental illness through better access to primary care treatment.

Resources will be funded within the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project, and the annual increase in mental health budgets.

3. Provide stronger leadership in mental health across government

- Further develop the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project.

The Youth Mental Health Project is focused on improving provision of services for youth aged 13-19 with, or at risk of, mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. We will work across government departments for a coordinated approach.

- Complete the review of the Mental Health Blueprint currently underway by the Mental Health Commission, and due in 2012.

The Mental Health Blueprint sets the current funding and service framework for mental health services in New Zealand. It was established in the 1990s, and targets mental health services to the three per cent of the population with the most severe mental health conditions.

The Blueprint is widely regarded as out of date, and is currently being reviewed by the Mental Health Commissioner.

A new Blueprint for mental health services is expected in 2012. National supports this work.

Labour would take New Zealand backwards

Labour:

- ✗ Allowed waiting times for key mental health services to increase.
- ✗ Talks about aspirational outcomes but have no actual plan.

We can't afford another dose of Labour.