



# Primary care emphasis

A strong primary care system should provide better management of chronic disease, improved continuity of care, greater accessibility, and earlier intervention and disease prevention.



This is the view of **Hon Tony Ryall**, new Minister of Health in the National-led Government, who is also Minister of State Services.

He has previous Cabinet experience. In December 1997 he was promoted into the Shipley Cabinet as Minister of Justice, and was also the minister responsible for State Owned

Enterprises, Local Government, Youth Affairs and Housing New Zealand.

Mr Ryall lives in Tauranga, representing the Bay of Plenty electorate. He was first elected MP for East Cape in 1990, and, following boundary changes, represented Eastern Bay of Plenty (1993-96) and Bay of Plenty from 1996.

He is a graduate of Massey University with a Bachelor of Business Studies (Accounting and Finance), and a Diploma in Business Studies (Accounting).

Mr Ryall sees primary care as the best way to deliver healthcare closer to home. "International research shows health systems with strong and vibrant primary-care services have much better health outcomes for patients at lower cost than those focusing on specialist or tertiary care.

National supports the Primary Health Care Strategy (PHCS). "We will realise our vision of affordable, integrated, multi-disciplinary family health teams providing better care for patients, closer to home."

The new Government wants New Zealanders to have broader access to medicines and be able to get innovative new medicines, sooner. "To achieve this, we will boost overall funding for medicines and speed up the registration of new medicines."

Mr Ryall chairs the Cabinet Social Policy Committee (SOC), which considers social policy issues including health, education, and welfare. Other members are: Hons John Key, Bill English, Simon Power, Dr Nick Smith, Judith Collins, Anne Tolley, Dr Wayne Mapp, Georgina Te Heuheu, Paula Bennett, Phil Heatley, Pansy Wong, John Carter, Dr Pita Sharples, and Tariana Turia.

Co-leaders of the Māori Party Mrs Turia and Dr Sharples have been appointed to ministerial positions outside Cabinet.

The Māori Party and the National Party agreed "to allocate these positions with agreed formally delegated and defined responsibilities in areas in which the Māori Party seeks significant advancement over the next three years."

Mr Ryall said his briefing from the Ministry of Health in December confirmed the health system faces major challenges: increasing demand for health services with worsening finances and a workforce crisis.

The briefing pointed to "a growing momentum for change in the health and disability system but the pace and extent of the change needed are not widely realised". Mr Ryall: "This is official-speak for 'we've got big problems'".

There are real issues with DHBs' finances, with total deficits for 2008-09 increasing from \$111 million to \$150 million. "We want to halt the growth in health bureaucracy. We want fewer back office staff and more doctors and nurses."

## National's health plan

1. Continue growth in health spending as set out in the 2008 pre-election fiscal update, including the Government's indicative spending allocations.
2. Reduce bureaucracy in health, with savings moved to frontline care for patients.
3. Ensure doctors, nurses, and other health professionals have more say in how health services are developed by requiring DHBs to involve health professionals in decision-making.
4. DHBs working together:-
  - Require the 21 district health boards to work more collaboratively to improve access to services and reduce administrative duplication and waste.
  - Not carry out another round of restructuring of the public health system.
5. Devolve more hospital-based services into primary care settings, providing faster access to more care closer to home, through delegated funding to PHOs and other health providers.
6. Support the 'smart use' of the private sector to increase the number of people getting timely access to vitally needed surgery, and reduce hospital waiting lists.



## Associate Ministers of Health



**Hon Tariana Turia** is co-leader of the Māori Party. She is also Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, and Associate Minister of Social Development and Employment.

Mrs Turia was a Labour Member of Parliament from 12 October 1996 to 17 May 2004, when she resigned, and subsequently founded the Māori Party.



**Dr Jonathan Coleman**, elected Member of Parliament for Northcote in 2005, also holds the Immigration and Broadcasting portfolios, and is Associate Minister of Tourism.

Dr Coleman studied medicine at Auckland University Medical School, followed by a post-graduate Diploma of Obstetrics at National Women's Hospital.

He holds an MBA from London Business School, and has studied at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Prior to Parliament he worked in clinical medicine and management consulting.



**Hon Peter Dunne** is the leader of the United Future Party. Under the terms of a confidence and supply agreement with the National Party he is a Minister outside Cabinet.

He is Minister of Revenue and Associate Minister of Health. In the previous Labour-led Government, he also held these posts.

Mr Dunne was a Labour MP from 1984 to 1994, resigning from the Labour Party in October 1994 to become a founding member of United New Zealand (now United Future New Zealand).

## Health Committee chair



**Dr Paul Hutchison** chairs the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health. He is also a member of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, and Emissions Trading Scheme Review Committees.

Dr Hutchison has more than 30 years experience as a health professional. He attended Victoria and Otago

Universities and achieved an MB. ChB in 1970, followed by a FRCOG, FRACOG and a Dip.Com.H.

From 1972-1974 Dr Hutchison worked as a Resident in Pathology at Metropolitan General Hospital, Cleveland, USA. He returned to New Zealand to work as senior house officer and registrar at National Women's Hospital in Auckland.

He became a lecturer for the University of London at St Thomas' Hospital and qualified as a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology. On return to New Zealand, he became a consultant at National Women's Hospital, working part-time in private practice.

In the 1999 General Election, he was elected MP for Port Waikato.

## Holding Minister accountable



**Hon Ruth Dyson**, shadow minister of health, and ranked fourth on the Labour opposition front bench, was Associate Minister of Health under Annette King in the previous Labour-led government.

She has been in Parliament since 1993, and was the Labour Party president in the late 1980s when

'Rogernomics' split the party – Roger Douglas is now back in Parliament as an ACT list MP.

Ms Dyson sees her job as holding the new Government to account. She argues that the new Minister Tony Ryall, ranked fifth in the Government's front bench, has identified problems in the health system, and says Government will fix them, but without understanding what the solution might be – "let alone committing to the resources to fund that solution".

"I will be holding the Minister of Health accountable for the promises and expectations he has made."

## School and club sports



**Hon Murray McCully**, Minister for Sport and Recreation, wants more Government sport spending to reach schools and sports clubs.

Mr McCully, also Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister for the Rugby World Cup, says schools provide the only catchment in which all young New Zealanders can be introduced to sport.

"If we intend to get better health outcomes and personal development through participation in sport, we have to start in schools."

Bureaucracies have grown over the years and a National-led Government would bring these under control to shift more funding into school operations grants. "Over time this will include additional funds for sport in schools and clubs." ●