



## THE PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

Press Release

From Paediatric Society of New Zealand:

Date: 11 November 2004

Embargo: 12<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November

Release reads:

### **The cost of poverty**

“Poverty is a major cause of illness in children in New Zealand. Poor children are much more likely to be hospitalised for diseases that are preventable,” Dr Nick Baker, President of the Paediatric Society said today. Dr Baker was responding to the findings from the latest Child Poverty Action Group Report released today : *Cut Price Kids: Does the ‘Working for Families’ Budget work for children?*

The health sector deals with the consequences of poverty on a day to day basis. Children who are socio-economically disadvantaged have significantly higher rates of illness, hospitalisation and death from conditions such as pneumonia, injury, skin infections, fetal growth restriction and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Overseas research also adds child abuse, developmental delay, gastroenteritis, ear infections and rheumatic fever to this list.

There is a cost to leaving children in poverty. “Children’s doctors and nurses see the consequences of poverty every day in their work. We are very disturbed with the findings of the report suggesting that around 175,000 of New Zealand’s poorest children will gain little from the 2004 Budget which was aimed to increase income support for families with young children”, Dr Russell Wills, Community Paediatrician and Society member said. “Until we help these children we will continue to have them in our hospitals and in CYFS care”.

“New Zealanders need to realise that leaving children in poverty now will cost us as a society in the future and investment now will save money in the future”, Dr Baker said. “We need to ask our politicians how they can allow children to remain in poverty at a time when we have massive budget surpluses.” The Paediatric Society of New Zealand supports the recommendations of the CPAG report. “The public of New Zealand need to say to our government today – We want all New Zealand children out of poverty by 2010,” Dr Baker said.

For further information, contact

Contact Details: Dr Nick Baker: 03 546 1800  
Dr Russell Wills: 0274 347694