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Māori NGOs give their perspective on proposed Health & Disability System changes

Māori NGOs give their perspective on proposed Health & Disability System changes repositioning Health & Disability Non-Government Organisations for the Future (A perspective for Māori NGOs) is a snapshot report by the NGO Council on behalf of the NGO Health and Disability Network.

Inspired by the Health and Disability System Review, Waitangi Tribunal Health Claims (Wai 1315 & 2575) and the Tribunal's Hauora Report, the report provides a Māori perspective of the potential implications of proposed health and disability system reforms on the Māori NGO sector.

Māori NGOs say the following are central to improving Māori health:

1. Ensuring the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori are embedded throughout. This means recognising the importance of mātauranga Māori as a vehicle to provide cultural constructs for improving Māori health and wellbeing and the delivery of health care and services in Māori communities. It is critical to ensure Māori leadership and control in mātauranga in contemporary health settings so that the right processes are central to any service delivered to Māori to protect the integrity of mātauranga in health.
2. Improvements in Māori health outcomes will come from better primary and community care services being provided in ways that are more accessible and appropriate for Māori communities.
3. We need to increase the focus on understanding the health needs of Māori communities, address these needs in a more connected way, expand outreach and home-based care, and address the social and cultural determinants of health.
4. Priority should be given to designing services for Māori communities, rather than simply making system-wide changes in the hope that the benefits trickle down.
5. Focusing on child and maternal wellbeing to ensure more equitable outcomes for the next generation of Māori.
6. More emphasis on preventative care and the promotion of wellness needs to become a reality. This would require more multidisciplinary services and a reduced dependence on models that focus on throughput.
7. Improving equity and wellbeing for Māori requires immediate improvements in the way the system delivers for Māori, a growth in the range and distribution of kaupapa Māori services and providers, and enhancements to rangatiratanga and mana motuhake.
8. The establishment of a Māori Health Authority with commissioning powers, with direct accountability to the Minister of Health.

The proposed changes for health and disability system reform are wide-ranging and will have an impact on the whole health and disability system. None of these changes can be considered in isolation from the others. Māori involvement and participation in the health and disability system reform will be the best way forward.

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The NGO Council is an independent body that provides advice to the Ministry of Health and does not represent the views of the Ministry of Health. The NGO Council Report is the result of extensive consultation with Māori NGOs and contain the views of those community agencies, fully endorsed by the NGO Council.

For more information on the NGO Council: <https://ngo.health.govt.nz/>