



The New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

Media Release

12 October, 2015

For immediate release-

Attention: Health and Social Issues Reporters

New Support for Cancer Patients

An important and compassionate initiative- this is how Dr Kerry Gibson, President of the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPSS) described Health Minister Jonathan Coleman's announcement of \$4.5 million a year for improved psychological and social support for people who have had a diagnosis of cancer. Having the input of psychologists for patients and their families during this challenging period of their lives will help people to adjust to their diagnosis and cope with the demands of treatment.

Iris Fontanilla, Chair of the NZPSS Institute of the Health Psychology said today that psychologists have a depth of understanding of the psychological effects of illness and are experienced in working in physical health settings. They are well placed to provide support and expertise for patients with cancer. Indeed, many are already working very effectively in this area. Having this level of support increased for adults, adolescents and their families will help alleviate the psychological distress, depression, and anxiety which can accompany a diagnosis of cancer. Many psychologists who work with people who have had traumatic experiences will be in a position to take up these roles.

The Government is to be congratulated for meeting a significant health need and responding to it in a way that will make a difference to the lives of cancer patients across the country.

Background to the New Zealand Psychological Society

The New Zealand Psychological Society is the largest professional association for psychologists in New Zealand. It has over 1500 members and subscribers and aims to improve individual and community wellbeing by representing, promoting and advancing the scientific discipline and practice of psychology.

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