

Rural Women New Zealand Health Policy

Rural Women New Zealand notes that: (what is the problem)

- Accessing health services costs more per person than in other locations due to lower populations and isolation factors
- Rural health problems are compounded by difficulties in recruitment and retention of a multi disciplinary health workforce
- Legislation frequently has unintended negative impacts on rural communities
- Telecommunications are inadequate for telemedicine service options
- Funding disparities for homecare workers is causing stress on providers and families
- Agriculture has one of the highest levels of workplace accidents

Rural Women New Zealand affirms the following: (what RWNZ stands for)

- Healthy families, communities, and farmSafe initiatives
- The right to a range of home-based and accessible community based primary health services
- Equitable and effective access to secondary health services
- Plunket and midwifery services that fulfill their stated (and Government) aims and provide women and children with appropriate care and support
- Innovative and flexible outreach services for all rural communities
- Holistically developed policies to ensure overall wellbeing of a community
- A well trained rural health workforce in sufficient numbers and pay parity
- Recognition of the contribution of volunteers
- The promotion of public debate regarding the impacts of social and health factors of legislation and policy on rural communities.

Rural Women New Zealand Inc believes: (solutions)

- That population based funding initiatives are adjusted to offset added costs of providing health services in low population areas to allow for higher unit delivery costs in funding formulae (eg. a 'sparsity' factor) or when specifying cost-efficiency criteria
- That the Government legislates and makes provision for pay parity between the homecare workforce and other healthcare workforces that provide similar services in other settings
- That there is coordinated use of rural health facilities and integrated care across primary, emergency, maternity, mental health, older persons services, home support and specialist services
- That joint provision of services with other agencies as a cost efficiency option is encouraged
- That transport/accessibility is improved to compensate for centralisation of services
- That there is promotion of the use mobile and outreach services
- That alternative funding streams are supported for threatened services
- That farmSafe programmes are established in schools as part of the curriculum
- That legislation and policy decisions are developed using the Rural Impact Assessment Guide.