

September 2017

*PodiatryNZ is a member of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ). This is a peak body that represents the interests of over 25 Allied Health Associations.*

At the August meeting, politicians from each of the main parties were invited to participate in a panel discussion about their party's health policies and the role of Allied Health professions within their health manifesto. The Green Health Spokesperson Julie Ann Genter, Labour's Health Spokesperson Dr David Clark and the Deputy Leader of The Opportunity Party Geoff Simmons attended, outlining their policies and answering questions from the floor. Later in a separate session, the current Health Minister, Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman, attended and addressed the meeting.

Jennifer Pelvin (PodiatryNZ CEO and AHANZ Chair) presented the AHANZ vision of optimal health and well-being for all New Zealanders, highlighting the fact that our professions span both public and private sectors, and increasingly work within the Primary Care space. Not only are we a key player in prevention and early intervention, but we have a role in the management of chronic disease, offering a within community, cost-effective option. As such, Allied Health needs both recognition and resources to enable our sector to grow and support the health system to our fullest potential.

Here is a summary of the discussion.



[Dr David Clark](#) (Labour's Spokesperson for Health) addressed lack of funding and leadership, and spoke about the need to push service delivery into primary care as currently one in four adults are not able to access services. The solution for Labour includes Allied Health, and David acknowledged that the potential contribution of allied health practitioners had to date gone unrecognised. If Labour were to govern, their aim would be to hold a Health Summit within the first 100 days that would include

Allied Health representation to work towards solutions.



[Julie Ann Genter](#) (Health Spokesperson for the Green Party) approached health in a broader context, with an appreciation of the interconnections between portfolios and the impact on determinants of health, including the role of improved transport links and a healthier environment leading to better health outcomes. The Green's vision incorporated a shift in thinking towards health being an investment rather than a cost, and directing funding towards early

intervention with a goal of achieving better policy outcomes with minimal disruption.



[Geoff Simmons](#) (Deputy Leader for The Opportunities Party) presented the broad economic agenda for the Opportunities Party. Their health policy was yet to be released, so Geoff focused on the need for sweeping reforms to the current system with a greater proportion of the health budget directed towards prevention and primary care, quoting a potential four-fold return on investment versus hospital funding. Geoff prioritised the need for a change of mind-set towards prevention (to avoid surgery and pharmaceutical management) and thus away from the idea of hospitals being the hub of the health system. He highlighted the value of Allied Health with respect to the support offered to individuals and families, and suggested that an economic impact analysis should incorporate a holistic view of return on investment in health.



[Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman](#) (Minister of Health) talked about the current governments increased health spend. He spoke about his recent attendance at a World Health Assembly in Geneva where he had the opportunity to listen to international health system challenges, saying increased demand for access was a current theme across all countries. He highlighted prevention and early intervention, in both the short and long-term. In particular, the importance of community-based treatment to reduce the pressure on secondary and tertiary services; and the need for smarter use of IT to respond to the rapid change within healthcare enabled by technology and disruptive models.