

Introduction

The Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the public health service specifications. These specifications are part of the Nationwide Services Framework Library (NSFL) for the purchasing of health services.

This is an opportunity to re-define the scope, priorities, composition and mix of services purchased to ensure their continued relevance to Government priorities, new legislation, community needs, professional practice and that they provide value for money.

Background

Between 2008 and 2010, the Ministry of Health re-packaged the content of the old *Public Health Service Handbook* into the NSFL tiered framework for service specifications. The service specifications are hierarchical. The tier 1 specification sets out the overarching requirements for all public health services, leaving most of the substantive detail to be defined in the subordinate tier 2 service specifications (eg, communicable disease, tobacco control, screening, well child promotion, mental health promotion etc).

The tier 1 and many of the tier 2 specifications represent only a minimal update of content from the former *Handbook* (eg, incorporating new legislation enacted since the *Handbook* was last revised in 2004).

General

Public Health Services are publicly-funded services that protect and promote health in the whole population or identifiable sub-populations. The classic definition of public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society”¹. Health promotion, as an important element of these organised efforts, is “... the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health”².

Public Health Services address the health needs of population groups. Services that are not mandated by legislation may be delivered through a spectrum of providers including DHBs, Primary Health Organisations (PHO) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

¹ Acheson D, Committee of Inquiry into the Future Development of Public Health Function, HMSO, London 1988.

² Ottawa Charter, WHO 1986

Engagement

After more than seven years, it is time to substantively review the scope and content of the service specifications and we are seeking your feedback.

The review will also ensure that other priority issues, such as service integration, *whanau ora* and regionalisation, and other government priorities are considered from the outset.

The Ministry will use this feedback, to inform the development of a draft revised Tier 1 specification. Following this preliminary engagement, the Ministry will prepare a draft revised Tier 1 service specification for public health. This will be made available via the NSFL website for comment by all interested providers. After considering comments on the draft, the Ministry will then finalise the revised specification with a view to using it from 2012/13.

For more information about the current Tier 1 Service Specifications, please refer to the website: www.nsfl.health.govt.nz/apps/nsfl.nsf/pagesmh/346 or contact Kathrine Clarke by email on kathrine_clarke@moh.govt.nz

See the enclosed information for details of how you can participate in face-to-face or online discussion about potential changes, or visit the Health and Disability NGO Working Group website for details: www.ngo.health.govt.nz/