Update from the Chair – June 2011

At our June meeting, we were pleased to welcome a number of representatives from the Ministry of Health. They included Joan Mirkin (who was involved in setting up the group), Mark Powell and Warren Lindberg, who have filled the roles vacated by Kelvin Moffatt and Marie Day. We were also joined for part of the meeting by Deputy Director General Sector Capability & Implementation, Margie Apa and her team member Nemu Lallu.

Margie gave us an update on the implementation of Better Sooner More Convenient (BSMC) changes and ongoing amalgamation of PHOs, which will see 38 PHOs as from July (down from 80 a little over a year ago). This recent publication profiling a number of BSMC initiatives will give you a flavour of the types of changes occurring around the country.

We were pleased to hear Margie say she is “hugely supportive” of our approach to our Primary Health Care project, which will be getting underway next month. Over the next few weeks, our secretariat Grant Aldridge will be seeking your initial input to the Primary Health Care project via an online survey. The scope for this project is on our website. He is also keen to receive your suggestions for case studies to examine as part of the project. (Thank you to those of you who have already made contact following my May update.)

We are seeking examples of PHOs and NGOs working together to improve effectiveness and efficiency across health and disability services in primary health. We are particularly interested in identifying specific triggers and levers that help collaboration to occur, so we might share these with the wider health sector and government. We are also keen to identify what barriers get in the way and how these can be overcome. Please send your initial thoughts to secretariat@ngo.health.govt.nz and be sure to respond to the survey when it comes out.

For nearly ten years, the Ministry of Health has supported the Health and Disability NGO Working Group as a way to gain a broad NGO perspective on issues. (You can see the range of projects we’ve led over this time on the website.)

The Working Group is one way that the NGO sector and the Ministry work together strategically on relationships to deliver better health outcomes for New Zealand communities. With this in mind, it was encouraging to see the government renew its commitment to strong relationships with communities, by announcing the launch of the Kia Tutahi Standing Together Relationship Accord on 1 August 2011.

Of course we can only represent your views if you keep us informed, so please contact your sector representatives or the secretariat if you have key issues to share.

You might also consider standing for the group at our forthcoming elections. We will publish our annual report in September and then call for nominations to fill several vacancies on the group, so please start thinking of people you might want to nominate. The elections will take place online during October, at which time we will also seek your ratification of revised and simplified Terms of Reference for the group.

Jackie Edmond
Chair, Health & Disability NGO Working Group