

## Media Response

**To:**

**From:** Jill Stringer, Communications Advisor

**Date:** 5 May 2004

**Subject:** School Dental Services review

Wairarapa DHB today announced their participation in a national review of school dental services.

"The timing of this is great for the Wairarapa", says SDS manager, Lynette Brandt-Shailes. "With the amalgamation of schools, we are at a time when a thorough review will be of real benefit to the region."

The review will take about 6 months, and must be completed by October this year. The review will be a discussion on Dental Health issues on community radio Arrow 92.7 at 10am Wednesday, repeated Thursday at 5pm.

"The first part of the review is easy", says Ms Brandt-Shailes. "It's just collating and analysing the facts and figures of current coverage and clinic condition and use. Now that we are into the second term, most of the migration of pupils between schools has settled down, so we can get a clearer picture. We already know we have issues about dental health in teenagers here, even though the service is still free until you turn 18. We also know that 50% of our kids start school with at least one tooth decayed, missing or filled. We know that some clinics will struggle to meet changing requirements, or may not be located where the need is greatest."

Schools own dental clinic buildings, but all the equipment and services are provided by the District Health Board.

"We need to look hard at how dental services are provided to children and young people. The research so far shows the annual check-up for primary aged children makes a big difference. The review should help us plan for the future, so we can quickly respond to changing population needs."

The second part of the review involves gaining the views of school Boards of Trustees and local communities, scheduled to take place in June and July this year.

"We want to be able to give Boards and communities the most up to date figures available, before we ask them about their ideas for the best way to provide services," says Ms Brandt-Shailes. "We think some interesting trends will emerge. Historically, our team of Dental Therapists has achieved really good coverage in the Wairarapa, and we want to do even better in the future!"

**Ends**

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