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13 February 2023

EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ON EPILEPSY

Epilepsy New Zealand is urging the new Health Minister, Dr Ayesha Verrall, to put into force New Zealand's obligations under the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and other neurological conditions (IGAP).

The need for urgent action is clear for the estimated 50,000 people living with epilepsy in NZ, as we mark International Epilepsy Day (Feb 13th 2023)

The Global Action Plan aims to improve access to care and treatment for people with epilepsy and other neurological disorders.

In 2022, the World Health Organization endorsed the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and other Neurological Disorders and its specific objectives to strengthen the public health approach to epilepsy. New Zealand endorsed the action plan at the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May last year.

"We would love to see a Government task force set up to implement IGAP, which we see as a powerful tool to support, guide and promote our mahi," said Epilepsy New Zealand CEO, Ross Smith.

"IGAP speaks directly to the mission, needs, and aspirations of the New Zealand epilepsy community," said Glenn Livingstone, President, Epilepsy NZ. "New Zealand is one of the signatories on the plan and we at Epilepsy New Zealand are committed to working with the government to implement this."

About Epilepsy

- It is estimated that more than 50 million people are living with epilepsy around the world. In New Zealand, 50,000 people live with Epilepsy.
- Epilepsy ranks among the top five causes of global neurological disability; an estimated 125,000 deaths per year globally are related to the condition. Untreated epilepsy is a life-threatening disorder. The death rate for people with epilepsy is three times that of the general population.
- Every fourth case of epilepsy could be prevented by addressing and minimizing risk factors,

such as stroke, brain infections, birth injuries, and head trauma. However, prevention strategies remain limited and underexplored.

- Epilepsy NZ is a registered charity and the only national organisation supporting people who are living with epilepsy.

See more at www.epilepsy.org.nz

If you or someone you know needs support, please reach out to us on 0800 374537 or national@epilepsy.org.nz

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For more information or to contact Ross Smith or Glenn Livingstone please contact:

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Established as a registered charity in 1956 (CC10611)