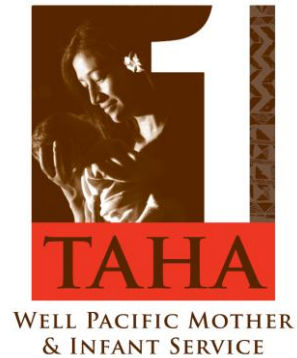


Taha Media Release dated 26 November 2009

Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Bula vinaka,
Fakaalofa lahi atu, Taloha ni, Fakatalofa atu, Greetings,

Pacific health service supports Children's Social Health Monitor



The New Zealand's Children's Social Health Monitor (<http://www.nzchildren.co.nz>) was launched at the Paediatric Society Conference in Hamilton yesterday. It has been developed to monitor the impact of the current economic downturn on child health and wellbeing. It will report on an annual basis, until the economic position of New Zealand's children improves appreciably.

The Monitor has been developed in response to the deteriorating economic conditions in New Zealand over the past 18 months, by a working group of health professionals from a range of organisations with an interest in child wellbeing.

Taha (Well Pacific Mother and Infant Service) is one of the services that has been involved in the development of the Children's Social Health Monitor because of the serious impact that the economic downturn will have (if not already) on Pacific families and the future generations of Pacific people.

The baseline indicators identify key concerns for vulnerable populations such as Pacific, particularly because Pacific are overrepresented in unemployment, low income, poorer health outcomes i.e. high hospital admissions, injury admissions, sudden unexpected deaths of infants and stillbirth, early school leavers without qualifications and significant hardship. These are some of the indicators used to monitor the impact of the current economic downturn on child wellbeing and if it appears that child health outcomes are deteriorating, then these findings will be brought to the attention of policy makers, so that appropriate responses can be implemented in a timely fashion.

Taha is a service that was established by the Pacific Health section of The University of Auckland's School of Population Health in May 2009 to support health professionals who work with Pacific mothers and their families during pregnancy and the first year of life. The service aims to address the risks of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI/SIDS) and Stillbirths within Pacific populations. Taha will be keeping a close eye on the results of the reports regarding the impact of the recession on Pacific child health and wellbeing so that they provide appropriate and effective responses to improve the health of Pacific mothers and children, particularly in pregnancy and the first year of life.

Dr Teuila Percival who is the Director of the Taha Service, has been a key member of the working group and is pleased that this social health monitor has been developed because it will benefit Pacific families.

"This children's social health monitor will provide us with useful and accurate information and data on how the recession is impacting on our Pacific children and their wellbeing so that we can address the issues in a more timely manner and provide appropriate help for families during these challenging times".

(A full copy of the report is attached. For more information, **contact:** Dr Teuila Percival, Director Pacific Health, School of Population Health, The University of Auckland, Mobile Phone 021 263-0113, Office Phone 373-7599 ext 86554, email t.percival@auckland.ac.nz)