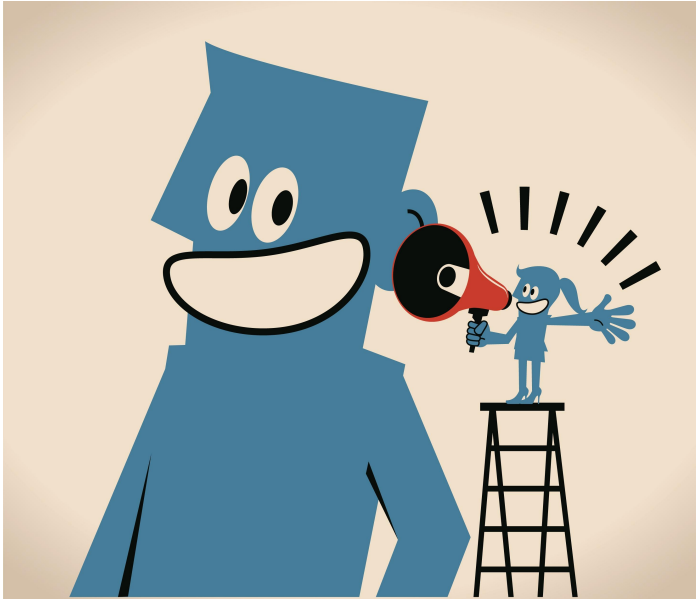


THE COMMITMENTS



Election 2017: What was promised for primary care?

The Labour Party committed to make big changes to primary care. Its election manifesto said in government it would, from 1 July 2018:

- lower the VLCA fee cap to \$8 per visit for adults and \$2 for teens, with a funding increase to VLCA practices to cover this
- extend the VLCA fee cap to 600,000 more New Zealanders who hold Community Services Cards but aren't enrolled at VLCA practices (including 350,000 people who will become eligible for the card)
- increase the subsidy by \$12 for all practices that lower their fees by \$10
- apply the subsidy to both GP and nurse consultations, and
- increase funded GP training places to 300 per year.

The above, at an estimated total cost of \$259 million a year, will be brought in as a bridging measure while a review of the primary care system is carried out, Labour said.

The review will aim to better match subsidies to patient incomes than the Very Low Cost Access scheme currently does, ensure the financial sustainability of practices, and address other barriers to access. The review will keep the fee for under-13s at zero and look to further reduce average fees for others.