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From: Nicola Grigg
To: Glenn Conway ; Cassandra Rivers ; Bryony Hilless ; Justine Banfield
CC: EXT Lucy Bennett
Subject: RE: meth standards lines

Sent: 25/10/2016 4:53:08 PM



Message

Hi again - just FYI - MOH is making its announcement tomorrow at 2:15 and has Dr Jessamine available for media interviews.

Would be great if you have someone from your end on standby too - undoubtedly media will come to HNZ.

Cheers
N

From: Nicola Grigg
Sent: Tuesday, 25 October 2016 2:23 p.m.
To: 'Glenn Conway' <Glenn.Conway@hnzc.co.nz>; Cassandra Rivers <Cassandra.Rivers@hnzc.co.nz>; Bryony Hilless <Bryony.Hilless@hnzc.co.nz>; Justine Banfield <Justine.Banfield@hnzc.co.nz>
Cc: Lucy Bennett <Lucy.Bennett@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: meth standards lines

Hi team

Still haven't had confirmed from MOH yet as to whether their PR is going out today or tomorrow but, in any case, below are the lines we are using - FYI.

Have also sent to the PM as he has a stand up later this arvo, in case it goes out between now and then.

Cheers
N

BACKGROUND

MOH has submitted a report of key recommendations for the country's first national standard for methamphetamine contamination to Standards NZ for consideration.

The report, prepared by ESR, recommends that a different level be used to guide clean up where meth has been used, compared to the level for houses where the drug has been manufactured.

The report recommends that the current contamination level that prompts a clean-up stays the same for houses where the drug has been manufactured but is four times higher for houses where the drug has only been used and where there isn't any carpet. The level is three times higher for houses where only drug use is found, but where there is still carpet in the house.

(The report notes that drug residue on carpets is more likely to result in chronic exposure to contamination for babies or toddlers who spend more time in contact with the floor.)

The different levels reflect the level of health risk from living in a house where someone smoked methamphetamine, and living in a house used to manufacture the drug.

LINES ABOUT METH AND THE CURRENT STANDARD

- The current MoH Guidelines use a fairly mid-range when compared with Guidelines from overseas. The value for methamphetamine in NZ (0.5 micrograms/100cm²) is the same as that of Australia and a number of States in the USA.
- The current tests are very tough. We are protecting the health of vulnerable tenants which means we risk leaving potentially safe houses sitting empty in areas of high demand.
- If adopted, the MOH recommendations will allow the threshold for contamination to distinguish between 'cooking' and 'using'.
- There will be further distinctions between carpeted and uncarpeted houses (4x higher for houses with no carpet and 3x higher for houses with carpet)
- HNZ is considering the recommendations and currently assessing the practical steps it can take to implement them as an 'interim guideline' (until Standards NZ releases a formal standard next year)
- Housing Ministers are very keen for HNZ to implement an 'interim guideline' as soon as practicably possible to get houses that have been assessed as contaminated under the current (very strict) guidelines back into circulation.
- While it appears the NZ guidelines are stringent, HNZ is a responsible for some of the country's most vulnerable people so it must continue to take a conservative approach to ensure the health and safety of tenants. That is to never house someone in a property that is currently considered to be contaminated (over the Ministry of Health's guidelines).

Nicola Grigg
Press Secretary | Office of Hon Bill English

Deputy Prime Minister | Minister of Finance | Minister Responsible for Housing New Zealand

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