

**Media
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New Money for Medical/Dentistry Must Address Fees

The New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) has welcomed the Government's announcement today of an additional \$24.6 million of annual funding for Medical and Dentistry education from next year.

"The injection of much needed funding must now go into reducing the incredible fee burden facing our medical and dentistry students," said Conor Roberts Co-president of NZUSA.

"Medical and Dentistry students face extraordinarily high fees when they study with courses costing between \$10,500-\$11,000 per year and graduates owing on average \$65,000 when they finish."

"New Zealand is short of doctors and dentists because high fees turn potential students away from a medical or dentistry course of study or drive them overseas once they finish."

An article published earlier this year in the New Zealand Medical Journal by the New Zealand Medical Association stating that the Government needed to find ways to reduce fees for medical students as student debt is destroying New Zealand's medical workforce.

"NZUSA's research shows that the huge cost associated with studying for a medical degree results in 88% of students with a student loan reporting that they experience increased stress levels because of the size of their debt, 42% said debt had influenced their decision when and whether to have children, and nearly two thirds stated they would consider leaving New Zealand within three years of graduating."

"It is pleasing to see the Government has recognised the problem of underfunding in this vital area, it now must ensure that the extra money goes into bringing those astronomically high fees down," Mr Roberts concluded.

ENDS

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