

1. FOREWORD

The NSW health system and health workers play a key role in assisting children and families in their pursuit of healthy, well-adjusted lives. A range of health policies, services, and programs are aimed at promoting child health, addressing preventable child health problems, and achieving the best health outcomes for children in NSW.

I am pleased to present this report on the *New South Wales Child Health Survey 2001*, which provides the first ever snapshot of the health and wellbeing of children aged 0–12 years in NSW. It provides a wealth of appropriate and timely information to support planning, implementation, and evaluation of health services and programs targeting children and their families in NSW.

The Centre for Epidemiology and Research of the NSW Department of Health, in partnership with the 17 area health services and the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, conducted the *New South Wales Child Health Survey 2001* using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). Parents and carers provided information about almost 9500 randomly-selected children aged from birth to 12 years of age. The survey was conducted between March 2001 and September 2001.

After describing the survey methods, this report presents information on the social determinants of health, including family functioning, social support, social capital, childhood activities and childcare, and preschool or school attendance. This is followed by a chapter on health behaviours, including smoking in pregnancy, smoking in the home, parental smoking messages, infant sleeping position, maternal folate, breastfeeding, nutrition, food security and hunger, sun protection, water safety, and physical activity and inactivity. Next there is a chapter on health status, including asthma, oral health, disability, general health status, emotional and behavioural problems, infant feeding and behavioural problems, and the physical health of toddlers. The final chapter covers health services, including services used, immunisation, visits to general practitioners, personal health records, child and family health services, parental support services, and home visiting (health services received in the home).

In developing the report, data were analysed by area health service, age, and sex, and only included in the final report if the sample size was large enough, the estimates were reliable, and the issue was of topical interest. This is a descriptive report, and there is a wealth of other information in the survey dataset that may be of specific interest. For these reasons, we encourage as many people as possible to access the dataset through the Health Outcomes Information Statistical Toolkit (HOIST), or by request, and produce more specific reports on topics of interest.

Parts of the *New South Wales Child Health Survey 2001* have been incorporated into the ongoing NSW Health Survey Program. Interviewing is now conducted year-round in all NSW area health services. Further information can be obtained from the NSW Department of Health's Centre for Epidemiology and Research. Comments on the NSW Health Survey Program, and on this report, are welcome.

I thank all the individuals and organisations who contributed their time and expertise to assist in the development and conduct of the *New South Wales Child Health Survey 2001*, and to the preparation of this report.



Greg Stewart

Deputy Director-General Public Health and Chief Health Officer

August 2002