



Alzheimers New Zealand

Position paper

Create and implement an older person's health strategy based on an integrated continuum of care

Our position

New Zealand needs a bespoke strategy to provide good quality, integrated and accessible services across the health and aged care continuum, from community services to the aged residential care and end-of-life sectors. This strategy needs:

- An independent, evidence-based pricing structure which covers the entire system.
- To be designed with sector involvement and support both providers and the workforce.
- An independent task force, with bipartisan political representation and sector input, to design, implement and monitor the impact of the changes that are needed in our aged care sector.



The problem

We don't have such a strategy. Which is problematic because in just a decade, more than one in five New Zealanders will be aged 65 years or over, approximately 1.2 million people. And it's well known that older people are the biggest users of the health system, which can't cope as it is. It's certainly not geared-up or prepared for the significant extra demand New Zealand's aging population will create.

The background

Nearly three per cent of all New Zealanders will have dementia by 2050. In addition, we know the already fragile New Zealand health system will have to cope with higher rates of disability and long-term chronic health conditions that require support on a daily or regular basis. As our population ages, we can also expect increasing numbers of people to live longer with more complex conditions and comorbidities that require more specialised care and support. This becomes a major issue when key transition points for older people between the health and aged care sectors are totally disconnected. Even within the same sector, transition points are disjointed. It's therefore hugely hard to navigate the system and get the right care and support when you need it.

The solution

New Zealand needs to take a holistic view of the country's health and aged care systems. We must invest now in an integrated health and aged care strategy that is properly planned, managed and funded - reflecting the needs of all stakeholders - to ensure it is equitable and sustainable.