



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 system, from community services to the aged residential care and end-of-life sectors. This strategy needs to be designed with sector involvement, and support both providers and the workforce.



The problem

Right now, we don't have such a strategy. Which is problematic because by 2028, one in five New Zealanders - around one million people - will be aged 65 years or over. Older people are the biggest users of the health system, which is already struggling and certainly not prepared for the significant extra demand our ageing population will create.

The background

Most people with dementia in New Zealand are over 65, with around eight per cent under 65 (Young Onset Dementia). By 2050, four people will develop dementia every hour in New Zealand, and nearly three per cent of all New Zealanders will be living with the condition. This will add extra pressure to an already stretched health system, which also faces rising rates of disability and chronic health conditions requiring ongoing care.

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. This becomes a major issue when the health and aged care sectors are totally disconnected. Even within the same sector, services can be 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 a well-planned, managed, and funded integrated health and aged care strategy that meets the needs of all stakeholders - to ensure it is equitable and sustainable.