

MEDIA RELEASE

Home and Community Health Association strongly welcomes Ministerial Advisory Group report on aged care

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The Aged Care Ministerial Advisory Group's report marks the most significant opportunity in a generation to meet the defining challenge of an ageing population.

With genuine cross-party backing, this report doesn't just patch the pieces, it turbo charges the aged care sector. It sets out, in stark terms, the cost of doing nothing against the opportunity that comes with reform: a genuine capability and system upgrade, that lets in-home care take on higher needs, keeping more people well in their homes for longer, and freeing up the rest of the health system to focus where it's needed most.

HCHA Chief Executive Lisa Foster says the report's integrated approach is exactly what the sector has been calling for.

"We recognise this is a big shift, and it is uplifting to see an integrated view that includes our kaiāwhina, care and support workers, and carers as a key part of the aged care system. This report widens the scope beyond siloed measures like ED numbers or free GP visits. The main logic is simple: pull the ambulance back to the top of the cliff, put real guardrails in place, and you can save money while building a more resilient, happier, healthier Aotearoa. That takes upfront investment, bold change, and a cohesive mindset," says Foster.

She adds: "Home care is the most efficient, smartest health dollar our taxpayers currently spend. A single night in rest home care costs about the same as a week of home care, and a single night in hospital costs about the same as a month of home care. Fund care at home, and you fund the beating heart of the entire healthcare system, now and into the future. This report gives us the blueprint and evidence so we can now build on that," says Foster.

HCHA is calling for a commitment to keep the report's recommendations on the Cabinet agenda.

"A report like this only matters if it's acted on. Doing nothing leaves government carrying billions in avoidable cost, and simply pouring more funding into the current model is unaffordable. Structural reform is different: the modelling shows it could reduce direct costs to government by just over \$830 million a year, by 2037/38 (in 2025 dollars), compared to funding the current model harder, while the net cost to government to deliver the initiatives is stated as \$168 million. That's a strong return on investment. Obviously, there's more detail to work through and more modelling needed, but the direction is clear. Now is the time for bold action and implementation, and a genuine step towards a stronger, healthier future," says Foster.

Among the report's recommendations, HCHA particularly welcomes two areas the Association has long called for:

- Immediate investment to stabilise the home and community health sector
- Development of a cross-sector workforce strategy for aged care with a clear workforce plan to enhance and build capability, expand the scope, improve career pathways, and improve respect and retention for aged care kaiāwhina support workers and family carers

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About HCHA

The Home and Community Health Association (HCHA) is the national peak body representing home and community health providers across Aotearoa New Zealand, spanning aged care, disability support and ACC services. HCHA is the national voice that promotes and advances excellence, partnership and sustainability for the sector. HCHA's vision is sustainable, equitable, high-quality provision of home and community health services across Aotearoa.

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