



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **CAREGIVER WEEK HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR MORE FUNDING**

HealthCare Providers NZ, which represents the country's aged residential care homes, is using Caregiver Week 10 – 15 March to highlight the need for more funding for higher wages.

"Workers in the aged care sector do a great job, sometimes under difficult wage conditions and we are using Caregiver Week to highlight the need for higher wages for these people," HealthCare Providers chief executive Martin Taylor said today.

Following an increase in funding of 2.45%, which was specifically tagged for caregivers, employers increased wages by an average of 10.9 percent<sup>1</sup>. But higher wages are needed to bring the sector in line with DHB hospitals and to reflect the important work these people do for New Zealand's elderly.

Mr Taylor said unions continue to say that providers of elder care have not passed on government-budgeted funding into workers' wages. "The unions are wrong to say that money has not been passed on to workers and their claims are undermining our efforts to secure higher wages.

"The wage statistics speak from themselves. If unions were serious about pushing for higher wages for elder care workers, they should accept that employers have passed on the money allocated for wages and work with us to secure more funding from the Government."

Mr Taylor said the current state of low wages in the sector has its foundation in the year 2000 when the Government set \$10.35 per hour as the rate on which to fund the care component of the aged care subsidy. This rate was then kept artificially low as there were no inflation adjustments on the subsidy until 2003.

"We have made excellent gains for caregivers. But we cannot rest there and we are committed to achieving better conditions and higher wages for elder care workforce. Our concerns are that the gains to date will be eroded unless aged care funding is inflation indexed. Caregivers' futures need to be secured," he said.

**ENDS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS CONTACT**  
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<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from HCPNZ remuneration survey which covered 421 aged care facilities or 55% of all aged care facilities in the country.