



PRESS RELEASE

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Aged care nurses deliver fair pay petition to Parliament

A group of registered nurses working in aged care today presented a petition to MPS from Labour, National, NZ First and the Greens seeking fair pay funding for the sector.

More than 15,000 people have signed the petition calling on the Government to address underfunding that means registered nurses working in aged care earn on average \$10,000 a year less than nurses in public hospital.

Dr Frances Hughes, who is Chair of the New Zealand Aged Care Association (NZACA) Nursing Leadership Group says it is time to recognise the dedicated and clinically skilled nurses who work at the forefront of New Zealand's aged care sector.

"COVID-19 has been a vivid reminder of the importance of continued investment in all our nurses and in particular those who work in aged care. Investing in them directly translates to the health and wellbeing of our aged population. It is time to see their clinical skills, leadership and continued, unparalleled hard work recognised."

The amount of pay aged care nurses receive is directly related to the amount of funding rest homes receive from District Health Boards – a per bed, per day rate based on the level of care each resident is assessed for by DHBs when they admit them to rest homes – rest home, hospital, dementia or psychogeriatric level care.

Chief Executive Simon Wallace says investing in aged care nurses is an investment in the future of care for New Zealand's ageing population.

“Successive governments have allowed a growing pay disparity between nurses in aged care and those in public hospitals. This undermines the value of the work they do and in turn undervalues the older people they care for.

“It has also accelerated shortages of nurses in aged care who understandably will seek the better pay offered by District Health Boards that rest homes are not funded to match. Our members are losing valued nurses at a time when we need them more than ever as they are simply not able to compete.

“As a society, if we really value the care of our older people, we must have pay parity across a common pool of nurses in the healthcare system.

“More than 15,000 members of the public have supported this. This also aligns with the recent Review of the Health and Disability System released by Heather Simpson on 16 June 2020, which has called for pay parity issues to be addressed for all professions working across the health system.

“Given Budget 2020 has injected \$4.37 billion into District Health Boards there is plenty to go round and no excuse not to invest in aged care nurses and older New Zealanders.

ENDS

For more information

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