**News release**

**Health and disability restructure on the right track**

The restructured health and disability system announced by Minister Little is very much on the right track, says Alzheimers NZ.

“We are excited to see more of a focus on putting people and their families at the centre, a national service delivery entity aiming to provide consistent services wherever you live, and a commitment to tackle equity issues,” said chief executive Catherine Hall.

“This approach will hopefully bring about positive outcomes for more vulnerable communities, such as New Zealanders living with dementia.”

Ms Hall says community support services for people living with dementia are woefully inadequate, having been massively under-funded for years, and terribly inconsistent from region to region.

“That was one of the issues with having so many different DHBs with different service priorities – it made it extremely hard for people with dementia to get the kind of equitable access they need.”

She noted the acknowledgement in the Minister’s announcement that ‘the settings and infrastructure of our health system’ didn’t effectively support the health workforce.

“And that’s how you end up with service delivery gaps which everyone with dementia in this country experiences regularly.

“Hopefully the creation of Health NZ, with centralised purchasing authority, will ensure that things like dementia services are funded appropriately and that the service delivery is the same throughout the country.”

Because dementia will affect nearly every New Zealand family at some point, Ms Hall said improvements to national dementia services can’t come fast enough for the more than 70,000 New Zealanders living with dementia every day.

Most people with dementia live at home for most of their time with the condition, hence the urgent need for improved community services.

“It’s a human rights concern at the moment,” Ms Hall said.

“There’s a lot of talk about access to equitable services – well, ask someone with dementia how that’s working for them now. It isn’t!

“So, while we do welcome this restructure, we also urge government to move very quickly to do more and better for people living with dementia.”

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