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Media release

All parties back community care, allied health ready to deliver

All of the main political parties say they want more health care in the community, and allied health professionals want that written into any post-election deal.

Ahead of the election, Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ), the umbrella body for organisations which represents more than 30,000 allied health professionals, asked parties how they would make better use of the workforce.

ACT, the Green Party, National, Labour, New Zealand First, the Opportunity Party and Te Pāti Māori replied.

The call comes on World Allied Health Professionals Day, which this year carries the theme *Better Health Together*.

Orquidea Tamayo Mortera, co-chair of AHANZ, says the replies show common ground.

“Every party that answered us wants more care closer to home and more effort put into prevention.

“That is the work allied health professionals already do. The common ground is there. What we need now is the commitment.”

AHANZ has written to party leaders asking for two commitments in any agreement to form the next Government.

The first is to make multidisciplinary community care a standard part of front-line health services, with allied health professionals working alongside GPs and nurses.

The second is to make prevention and early intervention a core job of those services, with funding to match.

Tamayo Mortera says neither step needs a restructure of the health system.

“The workforce is already here. More than 30,000 allied health professionals are working in communities across the country.

“Let people see the right professional early, close to home, and you take pressure off GPs and hospitals.”

Allied health covers about 40 professions, including speech-language therapists, diversional therapists, podiatrists, social workers, audiologists, music therapists, sonographers and many others.

Tamayo Mortera says World Allied Health Professionals Day is a chance to thank the workforce.

“Allied health professionals help people stay well, recover faster and keep their independence, from early childhood through to the end of life.

“Better Health Together is more than a theme. It is how we deliver care every day.”

AHANZ has published each party's full response, with a summary of how they compare, here.

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About Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand
Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ) is the umbrella organisation for the allied health sector, representing more than 30,000 practitioners across occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, speech-language therapy, and other allied health professions. Formed in 2001, AHANZ advocates on workforce, policy, and professional issues, working toward its vision of optimum health and wellbeing for all New Zealanders.

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