



Home & Community Health
Association

MEDIA RELEASE

Home and Community Health Association

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HCHA welcomes settlement on travel funding for support workers

The Home and Community Health Association welcomes the government's decision to support, in both principle and with funding, an agreement on in between travel time. From mid-2015 support workers will be paid for their time travelling between client visits and a further step early in 2016 will see support workers receiving a minimum level of travel cost reimbursement.

Julie Haggie, Chief Executive of the Association says that the result shows a willing intent on the part of all parties to see around 24,000 support workers more fairly rewarded for the important work they do in supporting people to live independently in their homes. Currently travel time is rarely funded, and therefore rarely paid in the home support sector, and there is considerable variability in travel cost funding and reimbursement.

"The other exciting element of the Agreement is that it sets out a process for the regularisation of the workforce and for a comprehensive review of the home and community support sector" said Haggie. "This sector provides direct support to tens of thousands of New Zealanders in their homes every day. Our sector's challenges affect all New Zealanders, particularly those living with support and their families. Our workforce needs to grow in both size and competency, to be able to meet the needs of the increasing number of people living at home for longer, recovering at home and leading a normal life where they want to be. To grow our workforce we need to offer staff more regular employment opportunities and to also be able to reward them for increasing their competency. Our clients also need workers who have the training and competency to meet their needs."

"The negotiation process itself highlighted that there is much we need to know and work on, in terms of travel time and travel cost during the next several months, and in terms of the broader workforce and sector changes over the next 2-3 years, and that is why a stepped approach is sensible. The Agreement now needs to be ratified by employers, workers and funders. The agreement is s also conditional on a comparable arrangement negotiated between the parties and ACC which also funds home support for people who have been injured." Said Haggie.

"We acknowledge and thank key individuals, and organisations that have worked so hard to get data, information, ideas and proposed solutions before decision-makers, not just because there was a threat of legal action, but because it is the right thing to do." said Haggie.

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