



# Professional Update

1 April 2026

## Here's what has happened in the last little while and what's to come.

The Palliative Care Collaborative Aotearoa (PCCA) serves as the primary national body for providing a strong, cohesive voice for the sector and advocating for high-quality care across all regions. We aim to provide a central point of reference and advice for the palliative care sector and key stakeholders.

In 2025 and early 2026, the PCCA's advocacy and leadership activities expanded across several critical areas. We have been actively engaging with the Minister of Health, Health New Zealand senior leaders, and various political parties to ensure palliative care remains a priority in New Zealand's Health Plan, where the core clinical, educational, and support services are funded. The Palliative Care Policy is available on the [Hospice NZ website here](#).

Our efforts have focused on sustainable hospice funding, advocating for nurse pay equity to stabilise our specialist workforce and ensuring a national paediatric palliative care service remains a priority. We are also monitoring the Palliative Care Bill and providing feedback on Adult and Paediatric Models of Care to ensure they are centred on the person, whānau, community and that palliative care is equitable and accessible for all, regardless of age, geography or ethnicity.

## Resources and Training

We are pleased to announce that the definitive version of the Palliative Care Handbook and its companion app are now available to support clinicians in daily practice.

More resources for patients and health professionals navigating a terminal illness can also be found on the Hospice NZ website: [Final 7 Keys Patients 2026.pdf](#) and [Final 7 Keys Professionals 2026.pdf](#)

Additionally, a new national online syringe driver awareness training programme has been launched, designed to provide a consistent educational standard for health care assistants and other professionals.

In this newsletter you can expect updates from:

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ANZSPM

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Hospice New Zealand

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Hospital Palliative Care

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Palliative Care Nurses (PCNNZ)

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Paediatric Palliative Care Clinical Network

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NZ Palliative Care Pharmacists (NZPCP)

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Your representatives: Dr Catherine D'Souza, Wayne Naylor, Sally Fleming, Dr Amanda Evans, Dr Evelyn Gerrish, Anah Aikman, Gretchen Leuthart and Selena Chiu

## Clinical Governance

Our sector is now represented at the highest levels of health leadership, with Chair Catherine D'Souza appointed to the new Clinical Senate. Pharmac has extended access to ketamine for community supply as of March 2026; the PCCA chair has been in discussion to make sure messaging regarding this emphasises the specialist-only approach to Ketamine. Please note that ANZSPM Ketamine guidelines are being updated to reflect these changes. These guidelines are hosted on the Hospice NZ website.

The palliative care section of the Healthify pages has also been updated. Thanks to Dr Jane Greville for this work.

## Data maturity and workforce insights

The PCCA uses data-driven insights to shift the national narratives on dying. The Dying Reviews was launched in October 2025, providing a public evidence base for the current quality of end-of-life care. The Hospice Data Commons project is now in its second phase, providing robust evidence for funding bids. A high-impact research article, 'The State of Palliative Care' in the NZMJ, by Dr Catherine D'Souza, identified palliative care as the fourth most at-risk speciality in New Zealand.

The Hospital Palliative Care Committee is launching an interactive data dashboard to track inpatient referrals and discharge dates, alongside a new workforce data dashboard developed with Health NZ analysts. A pilot project is currently underway to conduct a stocktake of Resident Medical Officers (RMOs) to improve the training experience and identify necessary workforce numbers.

## Upcoming events and international speakers

- Kevin Toolis Tour: March/April 2026, focusing on community conversations about death and dying.  
<https://events.humanitix.com/host/aotearoa-branch-of-aust-and-nz-society-of-palliative-medicine>
- Virtual Nursing Conference: Palliative Care Nurses New Zealand (PCNNZ) will host a one-day virtual event in May 2026.
- Hospice NZ monthly webinar continues.  
[https://www.hospice.org.nz/palliative\\_care\\_lecture\\_series](https://www.hospice.org.nz/palliative_care_lecture_series)
- Paed Pall Care Education Forum webinars - third Tuesday of every month. Email [ppccn@paediatrics.org.nz](mailto:ppccn@paediatrics.org.nz) to get on the mailing list.
- ANZSPM medical webinars, Dr Mary Millar from Sobell House is our next speaker. If you want to be on the mailing list for webinars, please email [nzadmin@anzspm.org.au](mailto:nzadmin@anzspm.org.au)

## Organisation spotlights

- We warmly welcome Anah Aikman as our Māori Kaitohutohu for PCCA.
- Paediatric Network: New AYA (Adolescent and Young Adult) resources are now publicly available contact Amanda Evans if you have young people in your care and want to know more.
- Pharmacists Group: Now 30 members strong, this group is collaborating with Australian counterparts to adapt community pharmacy resources for the New Zealand context.
- Māori Health: We continue to promote the Māori Ora cultural competency framework and the Kaimahi Māori and Pasifika Professional Development Scholarship Fund



Ēhara tāku toa i te toa takatahi, engari he toa takitini.

Our strength is not made from us alone, but from the collective.