



Hon Simeon Brown
Minister Of Health
Freepost Parliament
Private Bag 18 888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

13/02/2025

Dear Minister Brown,

Re: Health NZ report on current paediatric palliative care services.

I write to you to commend your action via a comprehensive report on the state of paediatric palliative care services in New Zealand.

The Child Cancer Foundation continues to be concerned about the lack of a comprehensive fully funded national service for children and their families who require paediatric palliative care. Child Cancer Foundation while not a specialist palliative care provider supports around 180 newly diagnosed families a year across the country delivering psycho-social care and financial support. Sadly, around 30 families are impacted by the death of their child due to cancer. What we know is the lack of national paediatric palliative care service leaves many children with less-than-ideal end of life outcomes as many require very specialised support that is different in nature to adult palliative services

Like the Foundation, those involved in supporting families do their very best under very constrained circumstances. Compared to services for adult palliative patients, it is a far more limited environment for children where palliative care is a specialty. Paediatric palliative care requires further specialisation and there are many health professionals across NZ who have stepped into this space to ensure children are well supported during this difficult time, many at their own expense, which is not a long-term sustainable solution.

We note that providing services across the country would only cost around \$8m, with the only government-funded service currently provided by Starship Children's Hospital. When you consider the current health budget to be around \$16.68 billion dollars, the cost of providing a comprehensive solution is only around 0.048% of the total health budget. While philanthropic funding is an important part of the support to families it should be in addition to, not instead of, a comprehensive government-funded solution.

Societies are often judged on how well they take care of the young and the vulnerable, regrettably with regards to paediatric palliative care services, New Zealand fails.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this and other issues with regards to child cancer in New Zealand.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Monica Briggs".

Monica Briggs
CEO Child Cancer Foundation.

Cc Tim Wood, National Commissioning Group Manager for Planned and Unplanned Care, HNZ.