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Allied health workers seek a fair go

New Zealand's 30,000-strong allied health workforce is using World Allied Health Professionals Day to voice frustration at what it sees as inconsistencies in the way COVID-19 alert levels are being applied to businesses.

Allied health professionals like chiropractors, physiotherapists and podiatrists aren't able to treat people in-person at Level 3 other than in exceptional circumstances.

Spokesperson for Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand, Hayden Thomas, says with Northland, Auckland and parts of the Waikato still in Level 3, many people are missing out on care which could significantly improve their well-being or aid their recovery.

"As the rules currently stand, many of us are unable to help our clients until Level 2, but at Level 3 (step 2), shops, bars, cafes and restaurants are able to open. It's our hope that we can convince the Ministry of Health and the government that as health professionals we know how to operate safely and can get back to helping hundreds of people who rely on us to treat and support them," said Hayden Thomas.

"This also highlights the need to build greater awareness of the valuable work allied health professionals do. We make up the country's second biggest clinical workforce and can make a much more significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders if our workforce was publicly-funded and fully integrated into the health system."

AHANZ is hoping that the redesign of the health and disability sector will see changes that create a more equitable, accessible and affordable system that has allied health playing a much bigger part.

For more information, please contact Hayden Thomas (Co-Chair, AHANZ / Chair, NZ Chiropractors' Association) on hayden@chiropractic.org.nz / 027 299 9939.