Advocating for change with the Ovarian Cancer Foundation New Zealand

Thank you so much for your interest in speaking with Aotearoa's decision makers about ovarian cancer. Taking part in advocacy is a powerful way to make an impact on the future of ovarian cancer care in New Zealand, and we are so grateful for your input.

Below are some suggestions on how to have an impactful conversation, but your passion and energy will be the real way to catch their attention and shift their thinking. If you have another area of ovarian cancer awareness, support, treatment or research that you'd like to champion please feel free to contact us at support@ocfnz.org.nz to discuss.

If you would like us to send you a hard copy of the State of Ovarian Cancer Report please send us an email at support@ocfnz.org.nz.

Introductions

Introduce yourself, and your connection to the Ovarian Cancer Foundation NZ *(eg you have a personal experience of ovarian cancer, you are an OCFNZ supporter, you are a member of a women's group that champions ovarian cancer, etc*

OCFNZ's report

State of Ovarian Cancer Report Aotearoa New Zealand | He kōrero mo te ahuatanga o te mate pukupuku kākano-ā-kopu ki Aotearoa confronts one of New Zealand's most serious health crises. The toll ovarian cancer takes is devastating with an average of 306 new diagnoses each year, and the death of one woman every 48 hours.

This report delves into insights shared by women facing ovarian cancer, their families, Kiwi GPs, the New Zealand public, our expert researchers and advocates, and the stats and facts available to us.

Opening and closing with the voices of women facing ovarian cancer, the report shines a light on what's going well, where change is needed, and what we're asking for to make that change happen.

The report was launched at Parliament on Wednesday, 11 February 2026.

Read the full report

The state of ovarian cancer in Aotearoa

One woman is diagnosed every day, and every two days one woman dies from ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer has a low five-year survival rate, at just 43%, and 30% of women diagnosed die within one year

Half of women are diagnosed in emergency departments, improving diagnosis through primary care can improve survival rates

How New Zealand compares to other countries

While almost 50% of women in New Zealand are diagnosed via the emergency department, that rate is just 21%-28% in Australia.

There are only five clinical trials available in New Zealand, and 44 in Australia. Clinical trials give women access to new and different treatments.

Women in other countries have access to medicines that are not publicly funded in New Zealand. The length of time to approve new treatments is of particular concern. Bevacizumab took twelve years, and Caelyx (which is funded in Australia) is not funded in New Zealand despite the application being made to Pharmac 18 years ago. *(if you have a personal experience of having to pay for, or miss out on a treatment due to it not being publicly funded, please share that instead of speaking about Caelyx)*

The report identifies key areas of public misunderstanding

While most Kiwis have heard of ovarian cancer, only 20% know the signs and symptoms to look for. Understanding the symptoms is especially important because there is no screening or early detection for ovarian cancer.

There is a big misunderstanding around what our national cervical screening programme checks for. 64% of New Zealanders believe that it can detect ovarian cancer, and a further 24% are not sure whether it does or not. That means up to 88% of people may (mistakenly) feel they are protected from ovarian cancer by cervical screening.

Similar misunderstanding occurs in relation to the HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine. 31% believe the vaccine protects them against ovarian cancer, and a further 52% are unsure.

Investment can transform outcomes for women

The Ovarian Cancer Foundation NZ makes eight asks that will really shift the needle in terms of outcomes for women facing ovarian cancer. Today I want to talk to you about *(feel free to choose one, or discuss all three, speak to the asks that you feel most passionate about)*

Invest in an ovarian cancer national register
Aotearoa does not currently keep good records about women's ovarian cancer journey from diagnosis through their treatment journey. Better data can lead to better outcomes by understanding what has (and hasn't worked for others) we can inform treatment pathways and support research.

Improve access to ultrasounds
Commit to improving timely ultrasound access for women to facilitate earlier diagnosis. Only 9% of GPs surveyed say ultrasound access is easy, and women tell us that access is often determined by one's ability to pay for an ultrasound privately.

Improve awareness, and dispel myths
Ensure that women engaged in the cervical screening programme are aware that the cervical smear does not test for ovarian cancer and educate them on

the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer so they can be empowered to take charge of their own health.

Wrap up

Thank the official for the opportunity to meet and speak about ovarian cancer. Ask them what their party or organisation's commitment is to women's health and specifically to ovarian cancer.

If you feel comfortable, ask the official if they would be happy to take a photo with you, to share on social media.

Send us an email at support@ocfnz.org.nz to let us know how it went!