

## Health Advocacy

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Independent health and disability advocates are located all over New Zealand. Their role is to inform consumers about their rights when using health and disability services, and to assist consumers who have concerns and want to make a complaint. They also offer education and training about consumer rights and provider duties to the providers of health and disability services.

Advocacy is a very successful way of resolving complaints, and is usually achieved more quickly than by other options. A health and disability advocate belonging to the Nationwide Advocacy Service will listen to consumers' concerns and explain the options available to resolve a complaint. The advocate is on the side of the consumer and will support and assist the consumer in any actions he or she chooses to take to resolve concerns.

The service is free, confidential, and independent of service providers such as hospitals, organisations that fund services, government agencies, and the Health and Disability Commissioner. Although covered by the same legislation as the Health and Disability Commissioner, the advocacy service reports to an independent Director of Advocacy.

All advocates can be contacted through a local telephone number or a free-phone 0800 number. There is also email and a free-fax number so that deaf consumers can make contact.

**Advocacy contact details are:**

**Auckland : Ph 525 2700 Fax: 0800 2787 7678 email: [advocacy@hdc.org.nz](mailto:advocacy@hdc.org.nz)**

**Nationwide: 0800 555 050**

**Website: <http://www.hdc.org.nz/advocacy>**