New Zealand Hepatology Nurses Annual Report

New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology & New Zealand Gastroenterology Nurses College Annual Scientific Meeting

Christchurch 19 November 2026

Committee: Judith McLaughlin (Chair), Susan Gale (Secretary), Jessica Southall (Treasurer), Nicola Caine, Barry Harrison, Jen Chesbrough

Nurses continue to work in challenging conditions in Aotearoa/NZ, so I am proud to report that the Hepatology Nurses Group continues to grow and provide support for nurses working with patients affected by liver disease.

Our focus continues to be on providing collegial support and facilitating member education. This year we ran our second in person education meeting in Auckland with the assistance of funding from NZNO and Abbvie Pharmaceutical Company. 35 members attended this meeting, and the feedback was once again overwhelmingly positive. We had presentations at our meeting from nurses working in the regions and were saddened by the disparities between regions and main centres when it comes to specialist care for patients with liver disease. This included regional units where there are no gastroenterologists, no access to diagnostic tools such as Fibroscan, and lack of nursing resource. The nurses in these regions remain the constant throughout, as nurses often do during changes to our health system, and groups like this are invaluable in providing support. We intend to continue our annual in-person education meeting as funding permits however, due to its popularity, we may need to limit attendance in the future to nurses working specifically in hepatology. We have also continued to offer online education forums this year and would like to increase the frequency of these.

The Hepatology Nurses Group has again supported our members to attend the Australasian Hepatology Association's course on nursing patients with advanced liver disease and have continued to fund our committee member's membership to the Australasian Hepatology Association (AHA). The AHA updated their practice guidelines this year however, they do need to be localised for the Aotearoa/NZ setting. We are also hoping to align them with the Nursing Councils standards of competence for registered nurses so that they may assist nurses in completing their Professional Development Recognition Programmes.

Many of our members attended New Zealand Hepatology Network meetings throughout the year which provide an opportunity to network with other hepatology nurses and Gastroenterologists while receiving presentations on the latest developments in Hepatology. We remain hopeful of a closer relationship with the New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology Hepatology Group however, they have not been active this year.

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RŌPŪ TĀPUHI HEPATOLOGY O AOTEAROA
NZ HEPATOLOGY NURSES GROUP

I am stepping down from the Committee and my role as Chair this year as my tenure has come to an end. I am very proud of what has been achieved in my time in the role and know that we have the momentum now to keep growing and progressing support and recognition of the Hepatology Nurse in Aotearoa/NZ.



Judith McLaughlin
Chairperson