


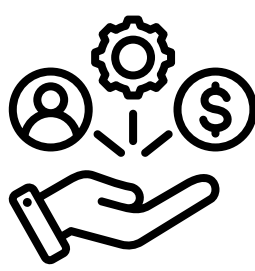

BEACONS OF PALLIATIVE CARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES EMERGING AS BENCHMARKS, DRIVEN BY LOCAL CHAMPIONS, PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Islands countries (PICs) present **unique challenges for palliative care development.**

WHY?  Geographic isolation  Limited resources  Diverse healthcare infrastructure

Few PICs were classified as having **isolated PC provision**, and **most PICs were** ranked as having **no known PC activity** by the 2017 World Map of Palliative Care Development.

OBJECTIVE We aim to **asses the PC development** progress in PICs.

HOW? 

Using a systematic data-gathering approach, **we engaged stakeholders across the PICs to assess PC development** in services, education, policies, community engagement and research.

AUTHORS

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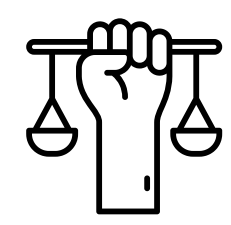
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RESULTS/FINDINGS



Growing **advocacy efforts** are improving **awareness and patient rights** (in Tonga, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands).

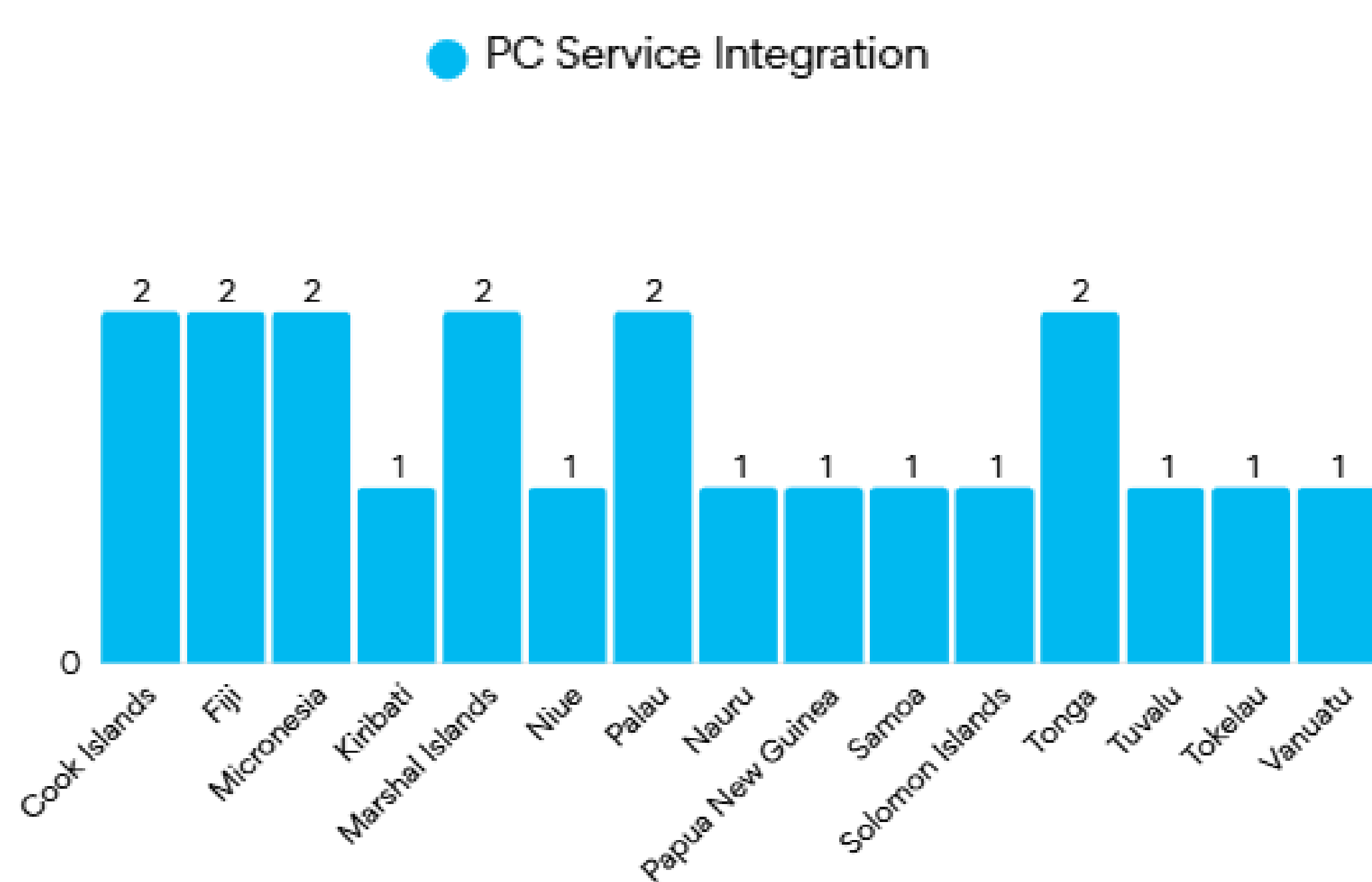


Palliative care is an **essential component** of **National Health Policies** (in Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Palau).



PC Service **provision** remains **minimal or isolated**, exist only in some geographic areas.

GENERAL VIEW



LEVEL 1 - No or minimal provision of palliative care services.
LEVEL 2 - Isolated provision: Exists but only in selected services or regions.
LEVEL 3 - Generalized provision: Available in most health services.
LEVEL 4 - Fully integrated: Palliative care is part of the national health system.

HIGHLIGHTS

VANUATU

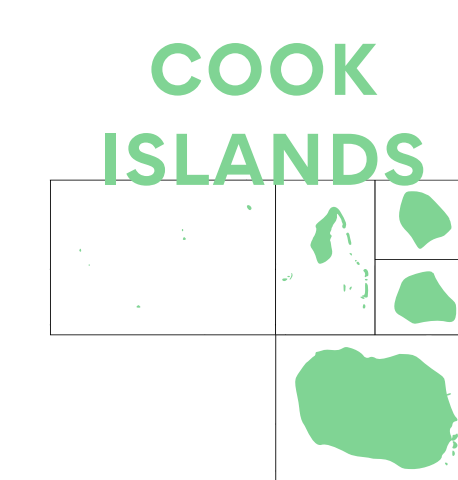


- Butterfly Trust and Ik-Kana support palliative care in Vanuatu through advocacy, education, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Palliative care recognized in the Health Sector Strategy 2021–2030** and the NCD Strategic Plan.

TONGA



- Breast Cancer Society and Ma'a Fafine moe Famili (MFF), supporting patients needing palliative care and caregivers.
- The Ministry of Health **review the need for palliative care in the context of the primary healthcare.**
- Medical and Nursing Associations discuss palliative care every two years, emphasizing its role in healthcare.



- A **National Palliative Care Policy** exists, but the implementation plan is still under development.
- Palliative care included in the Cook Islands' National Health Strategy (2017–2021) under Family Health Services objectives.

PALAU



- Palliative care integrated into the primary care and included in Palau's National Cancer Plan.
- **National Health Insurance covers palliative care under UHC**, but coverage is limited for off-island cancer treatment and palliative care.

CONCLUSION

Pacific Island Countries are making significant efforts in palliative care development through community-driven initiatives, policy integration, and inclusion in universal health coverage (UHC).

Palliative care services remain limited and inconsistent, primarily hospital-based and provided on an ad hoc basis. Access is further challenged by geographic dispersion and resource constraints.

These findings come from the **APHN Atlas of palliative care in the Asia Pacific Regions 2025**

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References: World Health Organization. (2021). *Assessing the development of palliative care worldwide: a set of actionable indicators.* World Health Organization; Tripodoro, V. A., et al (2025). *Implementing the WHO Indicators for Assessing Palliative Care Development in Three Countries: A Do-It-Yourself Approach.* *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 69(1), e61–e69.

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