
All District Health Boards

25 March 2019

Update for Chief Medical Officers and Senior Medical Officers on negotiations with the Resident Doctors' Association

Dear colleagues

Before updating everyone on the current negotiations I need to acknowledge the effort and work of all our colleagues in Christchurch who have responded with such dedication and professionalism to the tragic events of last week.

The care of the many victims is a testament to the skill and dedication of all involved. Everyone can be justifiably proud of the response in Canterbury and beyond.

RDA MECA Negotiations

After the last round of mediation concluded on 7 March, the Resident Doctors' Association applied to the Employment Relations Authority for urgent facilitation which is a request for a third party to make a non-binding recommendation for settlement to the parties.

Contrary to some reports, DHBs have not opposed the process and have provided further information to the ERA which will then make the decision whether or not facilitation will take place. We expect that decision in April.

DHBs are very keen to find a settlement which meets all party's needs and in the meantime we have agreed to further mediation on April 5.

It is crucial that clinicians have the ability to shape rosters for RMOs that provide the services patients need, while supporting the most appropriate training for RMOs. DHBs want to decide those rosters without the ability of RDA national office vetoing what's been agreed by local teams.

I want to reiterate that DHBs are concerned about the welfare of our junior medical workforce and are committed to safe rosters backed by evidence-based practice. Our aim is to work with colleges, universities, and unions to ensure we get the right balance of service provision, training and employee wellbeing.

We understand the RDA is balloting for further strike action which we think is unconscionable while the union has requested facilitation. The four-day strike being considered will put huge pressure on our clinical teams and impact patients across the country.

It's not uncommon in negotiations to include a lump sum payment to cover the pay rise that has been delayed by extended bargaining. A lump sum was part of the agreement in the STONZ MECA, and one is included in the current offer to RDA members. We have advised the RDA the lump sum will be withdrawn in the event of further strike notice.

Thank you again for the work many of you are doing to provide care during strike periods. We continue to be hopeful that we find a resolution that sees no further strikes but also gives the ability to shape rosters for better care and training.

I will keep you up to date as the discussions continue.

Regards

Peter Bramley
CE Lead
RMO Bargaining