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# All District Health Boards

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27 February 2019

## **Update on negotiations with the Resident Doctors' Association and ongoing strike action**

Dear colleagues

On behalf of all DHB chief executives, I would like to thank you all for your hard work, professionalism and commitment to ensuring patient safety during this industrial action. I know it's not easy and I appreciate the extraordinary effort in what has been a very stressful time.

As we approach the end of the latest RDA strike – the eighth day of action this year – it's pleasing to note there has been some progress in bargaining.

We've received no further strike notices, although we understand the RDA has balloted for a five-day strike towards the end of March and is threatening to issue notice unless we accept its terms.

There have been two days of mediator-assisted bargaining in the last two weeks and your bargaining team is due to meet the RDA again tomorrow (28 Feb) – our aim remains a solution that meets the needs of DHBs and junior doctors in training.

We are not seeking claw backs, pay cuts or forcing doctors to work excessive hours in locations they don't choose. What we are looking for is the ability for clinicians at a local level to determine how best to look after patients, manage training and arrange work while protecting RMOs' rights.

Our proposal does involve the union giving up the ability to veto rosters and training arrangements agreed at a DHB level, and that's what's proving to be the biggest sticking point.

I want to make it clear we don't want to change the rules on safe rostering. We are committed to safe rosters for RMOs, but believe it is important local teams decide rosters that will work for them.

You may be aware that DHBs filed legal proceedings with the Employment Relations Authority alleging that the union has breached its good faith obligations in bargaining. We believe that repeated misleading and inaccurate statements by the RDA are not in the public interest, nor the interests of RDA members who are basing their decisions on the misrepresentations.

The RDA overstepped the mark, and we've had enough. We're simply asking that the RDA play by the rules they signed up to and stay within the law.

It's time to focus on resolving the dispute, instead of focussing on disruption. DHBs will continue to engage in good faith and try to find a way to provide quality patient care and meaningful training in a safe working environment.

The RDA's rolling strikes are putting pressure on health workers and patients. We're incredibly grateful to the doctors, nurses and support staff who have stepped up to deliver emergency and acute services and reschedule non-urgent operations for hundreds of patients.

Again, I thank you for your patience and your hard work during this extraordinary time – if you have any question, please ask.

Regards

David Meates  
**Acting CE Lead**  
**RMO Bargaining**