
All District Health Boards

Nurses' strike concludes

District Health Boards say they are returning to normal services following the 24-hour strike by NZNO nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants that ended at 7:00 this morning.

DHB spokesperson Helen Mason says there has been a tremendous effort by many people and contingency arrangements worked as planned.

“Four DHBs had a challenging time because of high demand, but were able to manage thanks to the planning and the arrangements that were put in place.

“One DHB had much higher than expected demand, and required additional Life Preserving Services and increased medical staffing. This was managed by the systems in place although the DHB continues to have high demand.

“Most DHBs had managed to reduce demand by deferring electives, closing outpatient services, and reducing services which freed up staff to provide care and ensure patient safety.

“This has been an extraordinary result in the circumstances and a tribute to extensive planning and the hard work of many people including NZNO members who worked to provide essential and urgent services.

Ms Mason says the agreed Life Preserving Services plans worked as expected. She says some DHBs were quieter than normal, and had enough staff available so they could reduce Life Preserving Services requirements.

“Overall it has been a very challenging time and people demonstrated exceptional teamwork and camaraderie. I would like to say a huge thank you to them all for keeping our patients and our staff safe.”

Ms Mason says DHBs will now begin to focus on the next steps with the NZNO to find a way to settle the employment contract negotiations.

“We have a recommended way forward from a senior member of the Employment Relations Authority which DHBs will carefully consider over coming days and look at options for next steps in the coming days.

In the meantime, it will take a day or so for hospitals to return to normal and people should approach healthcare in the same way. If the matter is urgent, dial 111 or visit the emergency department. For non-urgent matters people should do what they normally do and visit their GP or pharmacy, and free medical advice is available 24/7 through Healthline (phone 0800 611 116).

ENDS

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DHB media release re NZNO MECA Negotiations

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