



New Zealand
Resident Doctors'
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Ian Powell
Executive Director
ASMS

By Email : ip@asms.org.nz

22 December 2016

Dear Ian

We have noted that some of our DHBs have decided to communicate with your members about the ongoing MECA dispute between the DHBs and RMOs. So the answer to the first possible question is yes, the safer hours dispute is still continuing.

Whilst the DHBs have come a long way from "no", the RMOs want to ensure we get this right – and we are not there yet. Outstanding issues include:

1. How the roster will work effectively, and to maintain as much as possible continuity within teams and training.
2. The DHBs also want ultimate say over the rosters as opposed to the current MECA provision which requires agreement. Putting it simply, the RMOs don't trust the DHBs to get this right so wish to keep their agreement provision.
3. Whether RDOs the RMOs will get will be meaningful and recuperative for them. As an example the DHBs believe the day we start nights should count as a RDO, even though we have little personal use of that day as we are sleeping in preparation for the upcoming night shift. Not to (sleep) would result in our effectively being up 24 hours by the end of that night shift; an unsafe proposition.
4. Whilst previously we had agreed that those doctors taking RDOs would be replaced by another doctor, the DHBs are now suggesting that on at least some of these acute on duty rosters, those that remain on duty can pick up the work of the missing doctor in addition to their normal workload. To the RMOs mind, safer hours but unsafe workloads is not an option.
5. An increase to our additional duties rates is still at issue. Whilst initially agreed by the DHBs they have now refused any increase despite most of these rates not having increased since 2002. We feel this is simply not fair.
6. And the MECA expired in February 2016; the DHBs have now withdrawn all backdating with the first (1%) increase to take effect late November or early December 2016. They propose a term of effectively 3 years 8 months to 31 October 2019.

Whilst negotiations since the first strike have progressed, at our last meeting at the beginning of December the DHBs had a new position from the CEOs and no authority to bargain further. The Resident Doctors overwhelmingly rejected that position and are now voting on whether further industrial action should occur. The result of that ballot will be known later this month.

We trust the above provides some insight into “why” we are where we are. NZRDA remains available throughout the holiday season to bargaining further with the DHBs and have invited them to do so.

As always, NZRDA acknowledges and appreciates the support of SMOs during such times as this; both directly to RMOs with whom they interact daily, but also in the provision of services during any strike action that may occur. On behalf of our members, please pass on our thanks to your executive and all your members in this regard.

We trust you will have a good holiday break and we look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'D Powell', written in black ink.

Dr Deborah Powell
National Secretary