



MEDIA RELEASE

25 July 2008

DHB fail to front up after “breach of good faith” ruling – what have they got to hide?

Resident (junior) doctors have been left wondering what DHBs have to hide after an appeal has been launched in response to last month’s Employment Relations Authority (ERA) ruling. This ruling found that the DHBs failed to act in good faith towards NZRDA by failing to provide information crucial to the negotiation process.

DHBs have failed to provide information to substantiate their claim that resident doctors are getting the same deal as Salaried Medical Officers (SMOs). As a result, last month the ERA ruled DHBs had 21 days to front up with it.

But DHBs continue to resist providing any information and have now launched an appeal against the ERA ruling. The New Zealand Resident Doctors Association (NZRDA), which represents resident doctors, says DHBs should either front up with the evidence or drop their “consistency” claim so they can get on with constructive negotiations.

“We wouldn’t mind if DHBs just dropped their claim that resident doctors are being offered the same as SMOs. Then we could get on with negotiations. But DHBs continue to state that we should accept their latest offer on the basis that resident doctors are being offered the same deal as our SMO colleagues. But the offer to us doesn’t look anything like the offer to SMOs - how can we accept?”

Dr Powell says by delaying providing the information, DHBs are also successfully delaying the negotiation process. “Despite this, and in the absence of this information, we are still willing to meet next week to see if we can progress matters further.”

Resident doctors are desperate to restore their Multi-Employer Collective Agreement (MECA) which expired in June 2008. "Our members are uncomfortable with the current arrangement where resident doctors are being placed on individual employment agreements (IEAs) in the absence of a MECA. MECA supported the training process for specialist registration by providing for seamless transitions from one DHB to another. RMOs are expected to move DHB to ensure that they get appropriate experiences to further their training. Without MECA, this process is now under serious threat. The current scenario will see more doctors wondering why they stay in DHB employment at all and look for security elsewhere."

Dr Powell says despite the MECA having already expired, NZRDA's membership continued to increase. "Membership is again rising with the few remaining doctors who were not members increasingly turning to NZRDA for protection. They are being confronted with the potential loss of a MECA agreement which protected them as much as NZRDA members."

ENDS

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Background

Junior doctors or Resident Medical Officers (RMOs or Resident Doctors) are registered medical practitioners, and range in experience from first year qualified doctors to those with more than 12 years experience. They work almost exclusively in the public sector, and are employed by all 21 District Health Board's.