



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **PATIENT SAFETY COMPROMISED AT WELLINGTON HOSPITAL**

In an effort to reduce unsafe waiting times for emergency patients at Wellington Hospital, Capital and Coast District Health Board has rostered resident doctors to increased hours.

However as a result the doctors are being required to work unsafe hours and are thereby putting not only themselves but also their patients at greater risk.

An additional doctor is to work a night shift at the medical department from next month in order to attempt to address concerns over inadequate staffing levels at night. However to make the increased staff level cost neutral the doctors have been required to increase the number of consecutive nights from a maximum of four to seven. This means that medical registrars will be working seven consecutive nights of at least 10 hours per shift in the midst of an eleven day stretch without a day off.

Sleep studies from around the world have shown the negative impact such rostering can have for doctors and patient outcomes.

This unsafe rostering initiative is a consequence of the 6 hour waiting time targets put into place three years ago which to date Wellington Hospital has been failing to consistently achieve. However the flow-on effect may be more errors and accidents for patients.

For some time the New Zealand Resident Doctors Association has raised concerns regarding unsafe rostering and the impact such practices can have however the solution according to DHBs seems to be to work staff harder. Patients may be seen sooner but at the cost of reliable safe health care.

**ENDS**

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