



NZRDA

New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association

RMO Feedback on Safer Rosters

[20 December 2017]

Dear Colleagues,

After a lengthy consultation process with the DHB, the Whakatane Hospital house officers managed to get the new safer roster implemented in time for Quarter 1.

During orientation, the new RMOs were excited that they would never have to work a 12-day stretch or 7 nights in a row, and were looking forward to having a 4-day weekend every so often. They were frequently reminded by the PGY2+ house officers of the exhausting 12-day stretches and gruelling 7-nighters that they would never have to work, and they were given brief history lessons about the strikes and bargaining over the past 2 years. This seemed to invigorate their interest in the NZRDA, and all the RMOs were keen to renew their TI membership.

The feedback from those who have had rostered days off after a 10-day stretch and split nights has been overwhelming positive. They report being generally less tired and able to focus better inside and outside of work hours. Some use the additional rest to spend time with their friends and family, while others prefer to indulge in their hobbies, such as surfing (apparently having 4 days off is "ideal for surfers" . . .). The deductions for rest days off are not loved.

An unforeseen consequence of the new roster is trying to navigate weekend swaps. Swapping weekends also means trying to switch rostered days off, and if the rostered days off aren't the same then it involves negotiating with a third person to ensure all weekends and rostered days off are covered. While this is a much easier process in a small centre like Whakatane Hospital, it could become quite complicated in bigger hospitals.

Overall, both the old and new house officers have greatly appreciated the new rosters. They are thankful for rest they receive after working a 10-day stretch and the improved wellbeing that comes with working safer hours.

Regards

Dr Ralston D'Souza