



3 October 2019

Attention: PHOs/GPs/Anglesea Urgent Care/ARC Group

Waikato DHB has received a series of further strike notices from APEX for both Medical Imaging Technologists and Hospital Laboratory staff. Whilst we do anticipate disruption to patients we have been working on contingency plans to minimise this and ensure patient safety.

Dates and contingency plans are detailed below:

- Hospital Laboratory Staff – Full withdrawal of labour
8am Friday 11 October through to 8am Saturday 12 October 2019

We are expecting possible delays of up to one day for non-urgent tests. All urgent tests will be processed as usual. These delays extend to those that Pathlab send away to our hospital labs for processing including immunology, serology, non-routine chemistry and TB tests. We will basically be treating these areas as a public holiday weekend. Molecular Biology, Haematology, Cytogenetics, Cytology and Histology will have full capacity so will be business as usual.

Patients attending the hospital blood collection clinic will be received however capacity for timely collection will be limited. We would therefore appreciate your support to restrict the number of patients attending on Friday 11 October.

If test requests are not urgent, please advise your patients to defer collection of their specimens to an alternative day.

- Medical imaging technologists - Full withdrawal of labour

Waikato DHB has received two strike notices from the APEX Medical Imaging Technologists (MIT) of a 24 hour strike on the following dates:

- 7am Monday 14 October through to 7am Tuesday 15 October
- 7am Wednesday 16 October through to 7am Thursday 17 October

We do anticipate significant disruption to services that have patients who require medical imaging, as during this time we will only have capacity to provide support to those requiring imaging for life/limb preserving reasons.

Whilst we are working to minimise this, the strike will impact general x-ray and CT services to ED, outpatients, inpatients and theatres. Cath labs and interventional radiology will also be impacted. However both MRI and ultrasound will not be impacted.



As part of our ongoing contingency planning the DHB is currently reviewing all outpatients and elective lists that may require imaging support and rescheduling patients. We will also be reviewing our acute theatre lists for Monday and postponing any surgery that requires imaging support where it does not pose a risk to patient safety.

We are very grateful for your support during the previous RMO strikes early in the year and appreciate the efforts you made to avoid sending patients to our Waikato Hospital Emergency Department during that time. Our Waikato Hospital and the Waikato Hospital ED are currently very busy and often at full capacity and we therefore ask you to consider ringing the ED or Specialty doctor on call before sending a patient to Waikato hospital acutely as the advice received may negate the need for an admission.

Please also continue to use ED avoidance programmes, like Primary Options, wherever possible.

As many routine community referred x-rays are outsourced to private providers we are expecting minimal disruption for general practice and urgent care centres.

If you have any concerns or are unsure about a patient, GPs can always ring the hospital for advice before sending a patient there, if they think this would be helpful.

Yours sincerely



Claire Tahu

Incident Controller

Chief Advisor, Allied Health Scientific and Technical
Waikato District Health Board



Damian Tomic

Clinical Director – Strategy, Funding and Primary Care
Waikato District Health Board