

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department

Step 2 Grievance

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) met with Launceston General Hospital (LGH) Emergency Department (ED) members on Thursday 24 September 2020 to discuss the outcome of the benchmarking and progress of the step 1 Grievance. Members discussed and agreed on the following:

1. The NHpPD ED model was never designed around a department that is constantly in bed block with most admitted patients (90%) only departing the ED after 27 hours and 23 minutes. (This is almost double the peer group average length of stay).
2. That the increase in FTE is for direct care hours, however positions such as the ANUM, CNC are funded out of these direct care hours which dilutes the direct care hours and leaves the zones consistently understaffed and only two of the three resus bays being able to be staffed safely. Noting the CENA guidelines determine that resus bays should be staffed with one to one nursing and nurses in ED zones only carrying a patient load of three patients at a time. The ANMF highlighted that at the Royal Hobart Hospital ED the above-mentioned roles are indirect hours and not removed from direct care hours which means that they adhere to the above-mentioned CENA standards.
3. Bed block has created a front of house issue with triage, the waiting room and the ramping area all having excessive workloads and nurses unable to provide quality care and members also articulating that they believe this poses a safety issue for patients and staff.
4. The demand on resus beds has also driven a skill mix issue with junior nurses in the zones having to take on increasingly more unstable patients whilst also having to care for patients waiting for admission. Further, compounding and driving skill mix concerns is the rate of staff turnover coupled with the requirement for nurses to be able to work as advanced/senior nurses to care for patients who are predominately unstable/conditions unknown.
5. Presentations from the North West have increased with the closing of the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department for an extended period overnight.

As a result, members passed the following resolution:

1. To endorse the increase in FTE that was identified via the eTool ED benchmarking process presented on 23 September 2020, noting, this is directly reflective of the increase in Average Length of Stay and defines the FTE required for those patients in the ED proper.
2. However, members note that the benchmarked FTE increase will not fix the workload concerns raised, given the bed block environment at the LGH.
3. As a result, the ANMF are endorsed to raise a NHpPD Step 2 Workload Grievance as per the agreement on behalf of members.
4. That to resolve this grievance and mitigate the sustained and unreasonable workloads the following measures must be implemented over and above the increase in FTE that was identified via the eTool ED Benchmarking presented on 23 September 2020:
 - a. Nurse staffing at the triage and waiting room area needs to be (at a minimum) 4 nurses for AM and PM shifts and 3 nurses for ND. A Clinical Initiatives Nurse (CIN) will form part of the team of 4.
 - b. An increase in Nurse Practitioners and an additional dedicated Nurse Practitioner to support the triage assist staff and waiting room area, further supporting the front of house team.
 - c. A Ramp Nurse on the AM, PM and ND shifts.
 - d. A Psychiatric Emergency Nurse employed for the AM, PM and ND.
 - e. A Clinic Coach for all shifts to assist in supporting skill mix concerns.
 - f. An increase in Clinical Nurse Educator FTE by 0.5
 - g. A Discharge Planning Nurse 7 days a week.

The ANMF have now written to Tasmanian Health Service (THS) management elevating the grievance to a Step 2 and requesting that a specialist panel be convened in the week commencing 5 October. The ANMF will continue to advocate for members working at the LGH ED, further updates to follow.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Member Support Team on 1800 001 241. Alternatively, email membersupport@anmftas.org.au. Please note: Due to the COVID-19 situation, our Member Support Team are practicing social isolation and working from home. Bearing this in mind, email is the preferred and fastest way of contacting them.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
29 September 2020