

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

11 May 2023

Jeremy Lappin
Secretary
Health Services Union
Level 2, 109 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
By email: jeremy.lappin@hsu.asn.au
info@hsu.asn.au

Dear Jeremy,

Re: John Hunter Hospital Clinical Information Department Rotation to Belmont Hospital

Thank you for your correspondence via email on 17 April 23 regarding ongoing discussions of the reintroduction of rotations to Belmont Hospital for JHH staff in CID.

We have reviewed your feedback and have provided a response to it below.

It has been custom and practice for CID staff members since 1998 to rotate between JHH and Belmont Hospital up until 2019. Staff had requested the opportunity to have a staff member base themselves at Belmont Hospital on a permanent basis. This arrangement occurred until March 2023. During this time staff members continued their rotations to a lesser degree to cover leave periods. The Health District identified that reduced rotations by staff members could not continue.

The clinical records at Belmont Hospital are paper-based and there is a requirement for the skill in processing these documents to be retained by staff in CID. It is crucial that the Health District return to increased rotations of staff members in CID to maintain knowledge and service provisions.

As Belmont Hospital CID rotation was considered part of the role, the rosters do not distinguish a work location at Belmont. Planning sheets are used to identify what tasks staff in CID are allocated each week, including rotations to Belmont. We have included planning sheets from 2015.

The Health District reiterates its position as discussed in the meeting on 17 April that there is a requirement for all staff to continue to rotate to Belmont Hospital. In the first instance we will be seeking volunteers as for some staff the location of Belmont is preferable. Depending on the amount of volunteers there may not be a need for all staff to participate in the rotations. Staff have been invited who do not wish to go to Belmont to discuss this with their manager and their request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. We note that there are staff members that have indicated they do not wish to travel to Belmont due to distance from their home. Staff will be given appropriate notice of rotations to Belmont Hospital.

A response to your feedback in your email of 17 April is below:

- 1. Any travel from the JHH to Belmont for employees based at JHH must be in work time.*
The Health District is not required to cover travel costs for staff who rotate to Belmont as it is a requirement of the position to rotate to Belmont Hospital. This has been the practice for many years and has been included in position descriptions and contracts.
- 2. Members cannot be required to use their own vehicle to move from one site to another in work time (for example, if they attend the JHH and are then asked to attend Belmont), importantly members' private car insurance is unlikely to cover any issues associated with that travel*
Staff will be given appropriate notice of when they are required to rotate to Belmont Hospital. As has happened in the past if staff at JHH must go to Belmont whilst they are at JHH they have been offered a

pool car to travel to Belmont. Most of the time this offer has been declined as they prefer to take their own vehicle.

3. *The HSU suggests staffing levels are increased to ensure there are sufficient staff to cover all FTE positions for expected and unexpected leave.*

The HSU's position on staffing levels is noted. There is a sufficient pool of staff members working in the CID service across Belmont and JHH.

4. *Senior staff are under considerable pressure to train new staff, further reducing the capacity of the team to complete its work and increasing stress. This is particularly concerning considering the significant and dangerous current backlog of work.*

Training new staff is an expectation across all roles. The Health District is unclear of what senior staff you are referring to. The Clinical Information Department has a buddy system supporting new staff within the team. This system has been working effectively in the Department for many years.

5. *Except for the GM, staff at Belmont have not been informed by HNELHD about the proposal, our understanding is that medical staff object to the change. The HSU is concerned that regular turnover of staff will reduce the quality and consistency of work, constantly disrupt work practice, negatively impact communication between the CID team and other Belmont staff, and reduce long term accountability for the service provided.*

No concerns have been raised with CID management about the quality of service nor of a disruption to the service. We do not agree with the HSU's position that there will be any change to the current high level of quality and consistent work that is provided by CID at JHH and Belmont.

6. *Members of the union may resign if directed to work at Belmont (even if travel time is paid), furthering the already difficult recruitment and retention issues faced by HNELHD.*

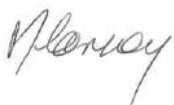
The HSU's advice on this is noted.

7. *The HSU suggests that a cost-benefit analysis is undertaken regarding the proposal (particularly in light of any travel payment required and HNELHD's current practice of ferrying documents from Belmont Hospital to the JHH by hire car for scanning).*

To clarify Health employees deliver documents from Belmont to JHH every day using a work vehicle. This is done in an appropriate manner and is cost neutral as it is a standard delivery of items between the two hospitals every day.

If you have any further comments in relation to this matter please respond by 19 May. I can be contacted via email melissa.harvey@health.nsw.gov.au or via phone 4921 3569 by 25 May 2023.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Harvey

Manager - Facility Services
John Hunter Hospital
Hunter New England Local Health District
cc. Alison Clayton - HR Consultant, GMHS

Attachments: CID rotations 2015-2018