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PTO leaving patients unsupervised: Industrial ban back on & Crib Away update

HSU attended the IRC on two occasions in the last week: on Friday about the multiple MRO patients being stuffed side by side in the vehicle, and the dispute about leaving patients alone; and on Monday before the Full Bench hearing the matter about the crib away allowance.

MRO/leaving patients alone

Government brought along an expert in infection control to bolster their case against HSU PTOs who feel that putting to patients with different MRO side by side was not only putting patients at undue risk for the sake of extreme efficiency, but immoral. Amazingly, the expert explained to the IRC that extreme efficiency overrides the low risk of cross infection to NSW's non-emergency patients. Faced with the advice of an expert saying that she was in the process of downgrading [contact precautions](#) in their [infection control handbook](#), the IRC refused to direct government to cease placing MRO patients side-by-side. This is disappointing, however we are currently considering the best way to win this issue outside of the IRC.

On the issue of leaving patients alone, the IRC ruled strongly in favour of HSU PTOs. The Commissioner made the following [recommendation](#):

The Commission recommends that the Health Secretary should not direct its staff to conduct transports in circumstances where it is reasonably foreseeable that patient will need to be left unsupervised at any point during transport.

This is great news; however, the government told the IRC and HSU they have no intention on following the ruling whatsoever.

We held a PTO delegates meeting this morning who unanimously endorsed the following bans effective immediately:

No patient is to be unloaded unless there is an emergency, or they are at their final destination (e.g., no pushing patient A around a facility while unloading patient B);

And, **HSU PTOs will not load a second patient in the vehicle if there is a chance they may be left alone at any point of the transport.** HSU PTOs believe patient safety is paramount, so have been left with no choice other than to take industrial action to ensure patients are not left alone.

Crib away update

The Full Bench made it clear to the government that they either needed to properly investigate the cost savings being enjoyed by forcing PTOs to dine away from their station, or the Full Bench will make an order that PTOs are to be allowed to return to base at break time.

It is the PTO delegates' view that we prefer the second option, that is, an award be made that mandates cribbing at home base. If this is accepted members will receive the pay rises that have been withheld straight away, while also enjoying the benefits of eating at base on a day-to-day basis.

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