

PMBH Nauseous Linen Allowance Update

Dear Member,

Following the most recent sub branch meeting held on Wednesday 23rd January, the HSU and sub branch executive met with Port Macquarie Base Hospital management regarding the nauseous linen allowance. The HSU delegation outlined to management the issues as discussed with members, including the fact that the allowance was recently incorrectly paid to HA-2 members only when they had contact with infectious patients and not as per Award provisions.

The delegation also informed management that members had been recording when they had been entitled to the allowance by documenting sign-on sheets for the past 12 months. As a result, the HSU delegation successfully advocated for members' entitlement to the nauseous linen allowance, and has called for back pay for members.

MNCLHD management has formally contacted the HSU regarding this matter. The correspondence is attached to this newsletter for members' attention. A sub branch meeting will be convened on Friday 25th January to discuss the response and further action, including the possible lifting of current bans if members accept the offer in the attached letter. The HSU urges members to consider the offer. A response will be issued following the sub branch meeting on Friday.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD



Health

Mid North Coast
Local Health District

Office of the General Manager

CONFIDENTIAL

24 January 2019

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union NSW
Locked Bag 3
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

Via Email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes

I am writing in response to the meeting held on the 23 January 2019 at Port Macquarie Base Hospital (PMBH) with Mr Michael Kearns, Health Service Union (HSU) organiser regarding the Nauseous Linen Allowance.

Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) would like propose the following to resolve the matter.

Effective immediately, the sign-on/sign-off sheet currently used by staff would be the tool to identify a claim for the Nauseous Linen Allowance. When this allowance is claimed, it is to be accompanied with a notation under the 'comments' section noting location, and a short description of the nauseous linen incident to support the eligibility of the claim given that the onus rests with the employee to provide specific details that, on each occasion claimed, they dealt with linen that was nauseous as per the criteria prescribed within NSW Health industrial instruments.

To address the matter raised in relation to overfilled bags, a reminder will be distributed to the relevant areas reminding other staffing groups such as nurses of the requirement to ensure linen and towels are to be deposited into the appropriate receptacle and in line with Workplace Health and Safety requirements. To assist with identification of areas of ongoing concern a notation is made in the 'comments' section of the sign-on/sign-off sheet so that these can be escalated to the relevant management to facilitate appropriate response and mitigating practices to minimise operational risks.

MNCLHD was provided with the definition/criteria for Nauseous Linen allowance by the NSW Ministry of Health (MoH) and is of the view and understanding that the relevant NSW Health industrial instrument prescribes for a an employee to be paid the allowance, once per shift, to those employees who do not normally, in the course of their work, come in contact with linen of a nauseous nature .

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It is my view that an employee may be eligible for payment of the Nauseous Linen Allowance provided the criteria is met, i.e. the linen is heavily blood soaked; if there is fresh faeces on it; or if there is vomitus material on it. Urine soaked linen is not accepted as nauseous, unless the patient has a medical condition which, as a consequence, makes the urine nauseous. Education will be provided to employees to improve the understanding of the definition, application of the criteria and therefore eligibility of the Nauseous Linen Allowance.

It is also the view of the MNCLHD that in line with the NSW Health industrial instruments and policies, the assessment of eligibility of Nauseous Linen is viewed separately from Infectious Cleaning Allowance and paid separately.

It should be noted that MNCLHD operates in the framework of NSW Health Industrial instruments and policies only and is not able to locally amend the definitions as this may have wider implications for the state.

With regard to retrospective payments, the onus rests with the employee to provide specific details that, on each occasion claimed, they dealt with linen that was nauseous as per the criteria above, following the locally agreed system. A review will be undertaken of the sign-on/sign-off sheets for the last 12 months (if available) or where records are present to determine the frequency of claim. The outcome of this review will be discussed with the HSU Organiser the outcome and next steps with the retrospective payment if required.

Should you require further information please contact Ms Melainie Ison, Patient Support Services Unit Manager, on 5524 2997.

Yours sincerely



Mr Garth Schultz
A/General Manager
Port Macquarie Base Hospital
Co-ordinator Hastings Macleay Clinical Network

cc Michael Kearns - Organiser, HSU at michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au
Karen Wiles, President PMBH Sub-branch, Karen.Wiles@health.nsw.gov.au