



AUCKLAND DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

Communications

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ADHB Media Release

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Agreement on mental health workforce issues

Agreement has been reached between Auckland District Health Board (ADHB) and the Public Service Association (PSA) on a way forward for the operation of the mental health service.

The agreement will assist in recruiting new staff to fill vacant positions at ADHB's acute mental health inpatient service, Te Whetu Tawera.

ADHB Director of Allied Health Janice Mueller said the agreement had been reached with a focus on ensuring continuity of service for patients while developing solutions to recruitment and unfilled vacancies which impact on working conditions.

"As a result of this agreement, ADHB will be working positively with the PSA to address solutions within mental health services," Ms Mueller said.

"We recognise that unfilled vacancies and working conditions have placed pressure on existing staff. We are grateful for their assistance and for the collaborative approach by the PSA to working through these complex issues.

"As part of the agreement, ADHB will temporarily close six of the 58 beds within Te Whetu Tawera. These bed reductions will be phased-in over the next three weeks and they will be closed for a month while the nurse shortage and working conditions are addressed.

“The situation will then be reviewed weekly by a joint management/union operational committee with a view to bringing the beds back online once new staff have been recruited.

“We will work with our regional colleagues to ensure patient care and continuity of service in the interim and we thank them in advance for their assistance.”

Ms Mueller said beds would close as existing patients were discharged from Te Whetu Tawera and that ADHB would make decisions on the placement of new patients on the basis of availability across the region.

She said the agreement was an opportunity for ADHB and the PSA to jointly map a way forward that would underpin good clinical outcomes for patients while working on issues of concern to staff.

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