

Doctors concerned “backroom” cuts will impact patient care

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A union representing Junior Doctors (Resident Medical Officers), Specialty Trainees of New Zealand (STONZ) has serious concerns about the impact of so-called back-office redundancies on frontline medical staff and their patients.

STONZ executive member, Emma Littlehales says that cuts to support staff will impact Doctor’s ability to do their jobs. “Our members have already seen the effect of a hiring freeze on their work and how it has taken away practising time from them and increased their non-clinical hours. There is a real risk that this gets worse with these further cuts.

“We are particularly concerned about the direct support that RMO’s need to do their jobs. The RMO workforce is a complex and mobile workforce. It is continuously interacting with the training system and without supporting staff RMOs are simply unable to do the clinical hours that keep our hospital doors open.

“When the support for this workforce is reduced the effectiveness of RMOs and subsequently the entire health system is reduced.

“The Government’s last health plan included a welcome assurance that a National RMO support framework would be introduced, along with better resourcing for existing support services.

“As part of their training, most RMOs are required to work in different districts for clinical experience. During these frequent moves, there are often issues changing between the different districts, including various leave, payroll, and other admin systems. The national framework is supposed to help fix this.

“We are immensely worried that the proposed cuts will put that promised support at risk.

“Around two thirds of doctors' hours worked in New Zealand hospitals are worked by RMOs, the more of those hours that are lost to admin work means fewer hours available for treating patients.”

STONZ is a union for Junior doctors that is run by Junior doctors and advocates for the long-term benefit of its members, their patients, and Aotearoa’s health system.

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